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Los Angeles

Emilio Villa: Poet of Biblical Proportions

A Dissertation and Translation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Italian

by

Dominic Edward Siracusa

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Luigi Ballerini, Chair

Emilio Villa (1914-2003) was a poet, visual artist, translator, critic and Bible scholar. His poems encompass modern and ancient languages, including Milanese, Italian, French, English, Latin, Greek, Sumerian, and Akkadian. The present study seeks to address two major issues concerning his works. First, critics have chosen to separate Villa's different artistic interests, as well as the various languages he employs. Here, instead, I show how everything Villa did was interrelated: no matter the activity or language he engaged, he searched to harness the creative force of the *verbum naturans*, the original linguistic act. Second, Villa's texts were printed by small publishing houses throughout Italy, and are for the most part unavailable today. By offering both the originals and their English translations, this edition makes his works accessible to an international audience.

Section 1 of the introduction, the *Status quaestionis*, examines the rather fragmented state of Villa's artistic corpus (both published and unpublished) as it has been disseminated between various institutions and private collections across the globe. Here, I also consider the most prominent critical essays on Emilio Villa and discuss some of the claims made therein.

Section 2, *Emilio Villa in the Landscape of 20th Century Poetry*, inserts the poet within the 20th century canon, comparing his work to that of his Italian contemporaries, as well as to that of international poets, such as Ezra Pound and the members of *Noigandres* in Brazil. My findings demonstrate that Villa's poetic experiments anticipated many of those carried out by individual writers or entire groups.

Section 3, *A Poet of Biblical Proportions*, analyses Villa's translation of *Genesis*, his poetry in different languages, an essay on primordial man, and one of his "art criticism essays" to show how he displayed the same interest for the *verbum naturans* in all his artistic endeavors.

The remainder of this edition comprises selections from each collection Villa authored over the seventy years of his literary career. The Italian of these poems has been rendered in English and the other languages have been left intact in order to maintain the same feel as the original. At the end of every translation the reader will find footnotes that explain cultural references and highlight the various techniques the poet utilizes. The "Sampling of Things to Come" includes a passage from Villa's unpublished translation of *Genesis*.

Finally, I provide an extensive up-to-date bibliography on Villa's works that will prove a useful tool for future scholarship.

The dissertation of Dominic Edward Siracusa is approved.

Massimo Ciavolella

Efrain Kristal

Luigi Ballerini, Committee Chair

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Biographical Sketch

Dominic Siracusa completed his B.A. in Italian Studies at The American University of Rome and holds an M.A. in Italian Literature from Middlebury College, where he wrote his thesis on Italo Calvino.

His scholarly publications include “Violence, Repetition and Utopia in Balestrini’s *Vogliamo tutto*” (*Carte Italiane* 2,4, 2008), “Casanova, Marinetti and the Art of Seduction” (*Carte Italiane*, 6, 2010), “Dante’s *cui*” (in *Francesca da Rimini*, Romagna Arte e Storia, 2013) and *Emilio Villa: Novissimo di dimensioni bibliche* (“Autografo”, n.50, 2014).

He has presented papers at various conferences, including “La natura poetica di Angelo Lumelli,” “Poesie ‘delfini’ del mondo,” “Afasia e poesia nel V Canto dell’*Inferno*,” “Cavalcanti: A Poet between Eros and Thanatos,” and “A Millennial Game of Telephone: Emilio Villa’s Translation of *Genesis*.”

In addition to his academic work, Siracusa is also a literary translator. His renderings of Italian poetry, dating from various periods, from the medieval to the present, have appeared in *The Chicago Review*, *The Journal of Italian Translation*, and other literary journals in both Italy and the U.S. Furthermore, he has contributed a number of translations of contemporary Italian poets to the forthcoming anthology *Those who from afar look like flies* (edited by Luigi Ballerini and Beppe Cavatorta, University of Toronto Press).

Together with Gianluca Rizzo, he has translated several novels for the prestigious Italian publisher Mondadori, among them *Montalbano’s First Case* by Andrea Camilleri (2013). He is also a co-translator, with Lucia Re, of the futurists novels *Una donna con tre anime* (*A Woman with the Souls*) by Rosa Rosà, which appeared in the *California Italian Studies Journal* in 2011, and the forthcoming *Un ventre di donna* (*A Woman’s Womb*) by Enif Robert.

Siracusa has taught all levels of Italian language at UCLA, has been a TA for several upper division courses (such as *Italian Cinema and Culture*, *Italian Food and Literature*, and *Italian Literature from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*), and led an advanced conversation course for the Italian Department’s study abroad program in Florence, Italy. In the fall of 2011, he was the department’s Teaching Assistant Coordinator, and over the past three years has organized an undergraduate workshop on how to read and write poetry in Italian. In the summer of 2013, he taught for Franklin & Marshall College’s study abroad program in Vicchio, Italy.

In 2011, Siracusa was awarded the Academy of American Poets’ Raiziss/de Palchi translation prize. His *The Selected Poems of Emilio Villa* is forthcoming with *Contra Mundum Press*.

Introduction

It seems fitting to compare the hunt for Emilio Villa to that of a white whale. To date, the criticism on his work resembles, for the most part, the first one hundred and thirty-three chapters of Melville's *Moby Dick*: they speak to the myth behind the great leviathan in anticipation of one day capturing it. Lacking, however, are those final chapters in which the crew of this vessel actually gets close enough to its prey to verify if these myths actually stand up to the real figure of the whale itself. The present endeavor seeks to embark on this last, perilous, and yet vital stage in the pursuit of Emilio Villa, to track down the leviathan through translation and close textual analysis in order to confirm the validity of certain myths and to debunk those brimming with all the exaggerations of a tall tale. This journey, however, is not intended to end in the triumphant capture of that mythical beast, but instead, remaining consonant with Melville's narrative, to shipwreck after coming into contact with it, allowing for the struggle to continue yet another day. This final prediction should not to be taken as an admission of failure before even starting, but, and this is especially true of poetry, as a realistic and rather welcomed outcome, for in the famous words of Giacomo Leopardi "il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare."

Similar to the journey ventured by Ahab and crew, the pursuit of Emilio Villa verges on madness. Born in 1914 just outside of Milan, Villa began to write poetry while attending seminary school in the '30s and continued to do so until his death in 2003. Spanning over seventy years, the body of Villa's work is enormous and it is important to note from the very start that even the most current bibliographies regarding his work have managed to expose only the tip of the iceberg. Furthermore, his works, either published or unpublished, are not easily obtained. The material he printed in his lifetime was done so through small publishing houses

and is now extremely rare. Upon his passing, Villa's unpublished material was divided into three archives: one public, one semi-public, and one private.

The public institution, the Biblioteca Panizzi in Reggio Emilia, contains his poetic works as well as his translation of the Pentateuch. The semi-public Fondazione Baruchello in Rome is said to house his writings on primordial and modern art, yet confirmation of this has yet to be obtained, despite multiple efforts to gain access and their promises to send a list of materials. The third and even more clandestine archive belongs to the critic Aldo Tagliaferri, who, in dividing up Villa's materials, kept much for himself; the works and their eventual fate is unbeknownst at this time. Furthermore, much of Villa's work also lies in the archives of the artists with whom he collaborated, (such as that of Luciano Caruso in Florence), in small libraries and museums across Italy (such as the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome, the Maramotti Museum in Reggio Emilia, or the MART museum of Trento and Rovereto), as well as in the hands of private collections (such as that of Angelo Calmarini in Milan). In short, this sporadic displacement of Villa's papers makes it extremely difficult to assemble a definitive bibliography; anyone wishing to analyze the work of Emilio Villa must content themselves by working within a small area of what is actually a much larger picture.

After painstakingly gathering these materials, we find that Villa's artistic interests were extremely diversified: he was a poet, a visual artist, a critic who wrote on both modern and prehistoric art, an etymologist, and a translator of ancient texts. No matter the genre or medium in which he was working, Villa composed his texts in a number of different languages, both modern and ancient: Milanese dialect, standard Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, English, German, Provençal, Latin, ancient Greek, Hebrew, early Semitic languages such as Sumerian and Akkadian, as well as the ideograms of primitive civilizations throughout the Mediterranean.

In his texts Villa causes these different languages to clash in varying degrees. One language alone may constitute a work, or there is a predominance of a certain language while others are sprinkled in, or abrupt code shifting is employed: one language suddenly gives way to another entirely as the text unfolds. There is also a more subtle linguistic operation at play, one that could be defined as a “cross pollination” of these languages more than a “macaronic” mixture. Concerning the form of a text, for example, a poem in Italian may take on the syntax of Sumerian, or vice versa; an Italian word may take on an ancient Greek inflexion; or a modern lexical unit will be created in Latin. In fact we can say there is, at times, a paleolization of modern languages and a modernization of ancient languages. These different tongues also serve to unexpectedly alter the tone of text, as when a base description of an orifice in Milanese dialect is offset by its high sounding Latin medical nomenclature. Furthermore, Villa’s erudition in these languages comes through on the level of content as ancient Mesopotamian deities suddenly appear in a poem in English about Palo Alto, California.

The relative unavailability of his works, his diverse artistic interests, as well as the great erudition he displays in his writings couched in different languages are all factors that have deterred many critics from working on Villa, which in turn has led to his almost complete marginalization from the annals of Italian and literature art thus far. This should not imply that criticism of his work has not been performed. However, those who have written on Villa have largely chosen to focus on one of these aspects, separating poetry from translation, modern art essays from those on primordial man, Latin from Italian, English from French, and so on. In addition, with the exception of a select few, these exegeses precariously hinge on idle theories unsubstantiated by textual examples. If we couple the unavailability of Villa’s texts with the fact that they are nowhere to be found in the writings about them, we find that these critics are free to

say whatever they please because readers have no evidence to confirm or deny their statements. As we near the hundredth anniversary of Villa's birth, Italian critics are still putting out anthologies of criticism entirely devoid of his work, which may do a lot for them, but does little for the author under investigation.

If these aforementioned factors cause the pursuit of Emilio Villa to appear as pure lunacy, then it is best that any new approach start over again from the beginning and this is what this study precisely intends to do. For a rather untraditional author, we have devised an equally untraditional dissertation in the hopes of correcting many of the errors made by critics and publishers in handling the work of Emilio Villa. First, this dissertation aims at curing the major plague crippling Villa's artistic corpus: the unavailability of his works to readership. The selections offered are in their original languages and only the Italian of every text has been translated into English. By translating Villa's Italian into English – the other languages have been left as is to maintain a “macaronic” feel – his work will finally be relinquished from the grasp of a limited readership and opened up to the appreciation of an international audience. These primary texts must first be provided before the proper critical groundwork can be laid.

Besides serving as a basis for the critical introduction of this dissertation, the translation also serves a vital methodological purpose. In the words of the late Michael Heim: ‘the translator is the closest reader of the text; while the critic skims across the page, the translator scrutinizes every word.’ And the scrutiny of every word in this anthology has revealed that Villa treated everything he did as poetry, or more specifically as the language of poetry, whether it be his art criticism, his visual art, the etymology of a word, or his translation of the Bible. More specifically, each of his works is obsessed with that moment in which the raw material of language precedes signification; and we should emphasize that the analyses of this study will

focus primarily on Villa's process of shaping this raw linguistic material, and not on its resulting meaning. Moreover, every language Villa chose to employ was treated the same: many of the same techniques present in his Italian are also found in his French, ancient Greek, English, and so on. Thus, the same attitude that one sphere of activity (art criticism, poetry, translation) does not take any precedent over another also applies to Villa's languages. While previous critics have chosen to divide, separate, and even isolate the individual spheres and languages of Villa's corpus, this study, instead, will examine everything as a whole. Therefore, if the present study moves between all these different things it is because they are inextricably interrelated in the poet's search for that moment of linguistic genesis.

The biblical reference is not unintentional: along with examples of Villa's essays on modern and ancient art, the "sampling of things to come" section of this volume also comprises a complete passage from Villa's translation of Genesis. This previously unpublished work is fundamental to understanding Villa as a whole for, in many respects, it was in translating this biblical cosmogony that led Villa to create a number of linguistic cosmogonies of his own, finding in this "ancient" text a number of techniques to revitalize "modern" languages. So in starting over again in the pursuit of Emilio Villa, it is only fitting that this journey be launched from the origins of all origins.

Before doing so, however, it would be beneficial to dedicate a few pages to the "current state" of all things Villa, as well as to his role within the landscape of 20th century Italian poetry.

Section One: Status quaestionis

As previously mentioned, the most important factor contributing to the myths behind Villa's artistic production, and consequently to the difficulty of approaching it, is the unavailability of his works. As far as the poetry is concerned, his collections were printed in

extremely limited runs either at his own expense, such as his first collection *Adolescenza* (1934) or by publishing houses that have long since closed their doors, such as *Oramai* (1947), *E ma dopo* (1950), *Heurarium* (in French, Portuguese, and English, 1961), *Brunt H options. 17 eschatalogical madrigals captured by a sweetromatic cybernetogamic vampire* (in English, 1968), *le mûra di t;éb;é* (in ancient Greek with Villa's Italian translations, 1981), *Verboracula* (in Latin, 1981), *Geometria Reformata* (mostly in Latin with a mélange of other languages both ancient and modern, 1990), and *12 Sibyllae* (in Latin and Italian, 1995).

In addition, other poems were published individually or were scattered throughout various anthologies: *Prendi la rocca e il fuso e andiamo in California* (in Milanese dialect, 1941), *Comizio 1953* (1959), *Iside enfante Kongo* (in French, 1964), *Letanie* (1984), *égypt taons d'isis* (in French, 1987), *Ridente sillaba* (in French and Italian, 1995), and *Letania per Carmelo Bene* (in French and Italian, 1996). Others still were composed as collaborations with experimental artists and included in art books, which were equally, if not more, limited than his solo efforts: *22 cause + 1* (with Roberto Sambonet, 1953), *Si, ma lentamente* (with Nuvolo, 1954), *17 variazioni su temi proposti per una pura ideologia fonetica* (with Alberto Burri, 1955), *3 ideologie da piazza del popolo* (with Nuvolo, 1958), *Phrenodiae quinque de coitu mirabili* (with Corrado Costa), *The Flippant Ball Feel* (with William Xerra and Corrado Costa, 1973), *9 méditations courtes* (with Giulio Turcato, 1974), *Logogramma* (with Nuvolo, 1976), *Anatomie* (with Luciano Caruso, 1984), *Trous* (with Enrico Castellani, 1996), and *7 mottetti* (with Achille Perilli, 2001).¹

¹ This list of works mentioned here only scratches the surface. Please see the bibliography included at the end of this volume for a more detailed list of Villa's publications.

Spanning from the late 40s till roughly the mid 70s, Villa's work in the sphere of art and literary criticism was printed in the most diverse magazines and journals now long out of print; the most important among them being *Arti visive. Rivista della Fondazione Origine and Civiltà delle macchine* – which contain his most important essays regarding primordial and contemporary art – as well as *L'Italia che scrive. Rassegna per il mondo che legge, Letteratura. Rivista di lettere e di arte contemporanea*, and *Il Meridiano di Roma. L'Italia letteraria artistica scientifica* – where we find a number Villa's reviews on the work of other poets, such as Giuseppe Ungaretti, Piero Bigongiari, Vittorio Sereni (just to name a few).² In 1970, Feltrinelli published a collection of Villa's contemporary art criticisms under the title *Attributi dell'art odierna. 1947-1967*, which was later reprinted in expanded form by the publisher Le Lettere in 2008. *L'arte dell'uomo primordiale*, which came out in 2005, constitutes the beginning of a project in which Villa intended to collect and expand upon his work on primordial art in one volume. Like much of Villa's work, this too was lying in the archives of one of his collaborators, Gianni De Bernardi, and came to light only after Villa's death. Although it is printed in its incomplete form, the volume is also supplemented by a few of Villa's more important essays on the theme. Published in 2000, Aniello De Luca's *Emilio Villa. Critica d'arte. 1946-1984* collects many of the essays that, at that time, were widely unavailable. However, this anthology has been rendered obsolete by the subsequent publications of *L'arte dell'uomo primordiale* and the expanded edition of *Attributi*, whose selections cover much more ground.³

² Worthy of note is the fact that in *L'Italia che scrive* Villa began a series of critical essays entitled "Svaggi lessicali," which could be described as a sort of dictionary of containing the neologisms created by his contemporary poets. Although they only number three, they are extremely important and will be analyzed here in section three.

³ While these editions offer an ample selection of Villa's art criticism, the numerous essays of literary criticism have remained untouched and should be made available again to readership.

Further complicating matters was Villa himself: he had a propensity for giving away his works before they could be crystallized into print. For example, in the late Eighties, Villa recited one of his latest poems – supposedly entitled *Sul nero* – at an event in Rome. Intrigued by the poem, one of the members of the audience approached Villa to ask him where he could procure a copy of the piece. Villa responded by handing him the poem. Shortly after, Villa’s companion Nelda Minucci went to up this person and ask for the poem back, stating that is was the only copy. The poem was returned, but despite Nelda’s efforts, it was never printed nor has it been mentioned in any of Villa’s various bibliographies (although I have a strong suspicion that it was an Italian version of his Latin poem *Niger Mundus*⁴, given that Villa often translated his own work between different languages and baptized them under another name).

Toward the end of his life, Villa also intentionally sabotaged his own bibliography: “[...] dopo il 1996, una oscura insoddisfazione lo induce periodicamente a cancellare o a strappare quanto ha scritto.”⁵ On the one hand, it’s disappointing that we currently possess only a fragmented picture of Villa’s artistic corpus but, on the other, it’s exciting to know that many unpublished surprises are still out there waiting for us. Many of these texts landed in the hands of private collectors, some of whom are willing to share their holdings while others are extremely reluctant to play nice.

A wonderful example of the former would be the case of the long poem *Poesia è* (circa 1980). Left for years in a box of unpublished material Villa had given to one of his neighbors, this poem was eventually unearthed and published by the poet Toni Maraini. It serves as an

⁴ Emilio Villa, *Niger Mundus (Mondo Nero)*, traduzione dal latino da e con una nota di Vincenzo Guarracino, Napoli, Edizioni Morra, 2005.

⁵ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino: Vita e opere di Emilio Villa*, Roma: DeriveApprodi, 2004, p. 197. Villa’s archives are indeed rife with examples of his attempts to destroy his work.

invaluable statement on poetics in verse, providing the reader with a wonderful introduction to all the artistic spheres Villa engaged. Instead, the more reluctant “custodians,” hailing from both public and private institutions, make it next to impossible for these texts to ever circulate. Treating Villa like some sort of rare gem, they keep his work under lock and key, greedily waiting for their investments to pay off, as soon as the so-called academic community finally realizes that he was one of the most important figures not only of the 20th century, but of Italian literature in general. This situation – prompted by either the attitude that the market value placed on the work of art stands paramount to its artistic one or by shameless intellectual hoarding (both of which egregiously go against everything Villa stood for) – has hindered not only the poet’s exposure but more importantly the potential to find significant connections and/or differences among his varied poetics.

To clarify the rather murky state of Villa’s unpublished works requires a philological dedication equal to that of the Humanists: like these scholars who crossed the Alps on horseback in search of ancient manuscripts, one must go to great lengths in order to locate Villa’s material, even trekking to destinations as far off as San Paolo, Brazil.⁶ Trips to South America aside, the search for Villa’s more obscure works in and around Italy alone already proves dizzying: one must first contact Villa’s friends, fellow artists, and various archives, which in turn give rise to other contacts, amounting to an overwhelming number of leads.

Not all of Villa’s works, however, were cast to the wind. As mentioned, the material he had kept for himself was divided between two different archives: the Biblioteca Panizzi in

⁶ Villa lived in San Paolo from 1950 to 1951, where he worked for the MASP Museum under the direction of his friend and fellow compatriot Pietro Bardi. Although his stay was brief, Villa was extremely prolific while in Brazil. We know that he composed a number of placards for exhibitions on primitive South American art (the specific contents of which remain unclear), but it is very likely that the museum’s archives reserve other surprises.

Reggio Emilia and the Fondazione Baruchello just outside Rome. The Biblioteca Panizzi houses what could loosely be referred to as Villa's "writings": his a-confessional translation and commentary of the Bible; some rare published works, such as collections of verse or collaborations with other artists; a few original manuscripts of poems, translations, and art criticisms; the beginnings of a project dedicated to an etymological dictionary of the Italian language (focusing on the languages that precede the typical Latin or Greek); and finally about two boxes of unpublished materials. Undoubtedly, the two holdings most important to future scholarship on Villa are his translations of the Bible and these unpublished materials, both of which present a unique set of hurdles.

Villa began his translation of the Bible as early as his time at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and continued to work on it all his life. At one point, with the help of the intellectual talent scout Robert Bazlen, Villa had signed a contract with the Italian publisher Einaudi to print the translation, but they quickly backed out of the project, worried about the controversies a philologically unbiased version of the Bible might instigate with the Church. As it stands, the manuscript is comprised of some fifteen boxes of unbound papers. Furthermore, the papers themselves bear all the confusion of a project that was abandoned and then picked up again over a span of fifty years by a man who did not have a knack for bookkeeping: more than three or four different colors of ink often overlap on one page, making it difficult to figure out which, if any, of the commentaries are definitive; entire passages of the translation itself or certain observations are crossed out completely; and entire pages may be devoted to Villa's research in the etymology of one word alone, but it is difficult to tell in what book, passage, or context it should be inserted.

In addition, Villa's is not a typical translation of the Bible, not only for his search for authenticity and rejection of denominational partiality, but also for his approach: rather than translating directly from the standard Septuagint version in ancient Greek, Villa translated from a number of different sources, seeking the etymological foundations of words that lie in the cultures that preceded it (such as in the early Semitic dialects of the various tribes that eventually formed the ancient Hebrew culture). In doing so he pulled from the most disparate sources (different archives that hold different editions written in different languages) in order to create a sort of biblical collage. This study will limit itself to the broader strokes of this particular endeavor, focusing mainly on Villa's introduction to the work, as well as his translation of Genesis.

The few boxes of unpublished material held at the Panizzi library mostly consist of verse, but they are written on scraps of paper that were previously gas bills, receipts, brochures for exhibitions, post cards, paper bags, bus tickets, calendars, or the work of other authors (for example, Villa composed his own poem between the lines of one by Francesco Leonetti, resulting in a composition *a la cadavre exqui*: it creates an interesting dialogue between two rather diverse poets). Some of this material was stapled together by Villa, implying continuity, yet at the same time these poems cannot be reconstructed in any linear manner for that would require removing the staple, which is prohibited by the archive.⁷

Furthermore, as Villa began to slowly destroy his own archives, he threw out some works altogether or defaced others in order to mask the intentions behind them. Throughout this

⁷ There does exist a few folders containing linear poems written in different languages (mostly French, Latin, Italian and English). To include all this material in our anthology would require another trip to Reggio Emilia, weeks of transcribing, and would result in an enormous tome. Thus this task will be left for another volume dedicated solely to Villa's unpublished verse. However, since we are presenting Villa to an English audience, some of his unpublished English poems will be included and considered here.

process, a great portion of his material was re-titled, as evidenced by the use of a different color ink than that used in the body of the text. Here, as he always did, Villa was playing with the enigmatic quality of language, for these new titles seem to derive from some long-lost, mysterious lexicon, such as XEIS, SHIVS, ESSMO, CASSEOHS, $\Sigma O \Sigma$, ABKUM, just to list a few. These factors make it difficult to decipher which texts are actually unpublished materials and which are the original manuscripts of printed works now disguised under a new identity. For example, a piece entitled KOCHS is actually one of Villa's collaborations with the poet and visual artist Luciano Caruso, previously published by the duo (under a different title) in the Eighties in a limited run of one hundred copies. This could only be verified by comparing Villa's manuscript with a printed copy lying in Caruso's archives. Thus, when approaching these papers in the hopes of discovering an unpublished poem, scholars must not only be ready for Villa's archival traps, but also learn to enjoy and respect the game of cat and mouse he has laid out for them.

The Fondazione Baruchello, instead, plays host to the majority of Villa's visual works, as well as to a number of his collaborations with other artists. Different from the Biblioteca Panizzi, this archive seems more a fortress than a place of learning and discovery. Their website boasts the facility is tucked away outside Rome, lying peacefully on a hill overlooking the countryside. Yet this is just a deceptive way of saying 'visitors beware, the choice of such a remote location spares us from having to deal with foot traffic and deters anyone from coming all the way out here without the proper invitation.' Even if one is lucky enough to have a letter of presentation from the poet Nanni Balestrini, this only merits access to one of the Foundation's email addresses, whether they respond to your messages or not, is another story entirely. Only those flaunting connections with the Pope, equipped with a silver tongue to outwit Ulysses himself, or

employing the feminine skills of Cleopatra are granted entry, but even then they are only permitted to look at, and not touch, the books lining the shelves, as if the information would be eventually transmitted telepathically to the researcher if he or she stared at them long enough. Reproductions, photos, and copies are out of the question. The contents of Baruchello's vault are so closely guarded that not even the director of Villa's archives in Reggio Emilia knows what works they have in their possession, despite his many efforts to procure a list (although it has now come to my attention that no such list can be provided because the holdings are still unorganized and un-catalogued). In reality, nobody knows what this so-called archive actually has because nobody is allowed in. The reasons behind such a safeguarding of Villa's works can only be left to speculation, but the very fact that they are doing it nevertheless shows their complete disregard for his philosophy on art: it was meant to be circulated, to carve out its own fate, not to be kept under lock and key.

There does exist a third archive, yet unfortunately it is even more clandestine than the one just described. After Villa's death, his heirs appointed Aldo Tagliaferri with the task of dividing up the material between Rome and Reggio Emilia, but he held on to quite a few things for himself.⁸ In an email exchange with Bello Minciacchi, I was told that there are plans to transcribe and publish Villa's Italian translations of the Homeric Hymns, a work that has never appeared in any of his bibliographies. Upon asking for further information regarding this intriguing collection, I was told that Tagliaferri had supplied the photocopies. Naturally, given the aforementioned difficulties already inherent to tracking down Villa's work, my suspicions were raised. It did not surprise me, then, that in reading through the scholarship on Villa in preparation for this study I discovered that certain critics include a footnote thanking Tagliaferri

⁸ This fact has recently been confirmed by Villa's son, Francesco, who lives in Palo Alto California, only a stones throw away from where the author of this study was born.

for helping them to advance their research by providing them with some rather “rare” documents.⁹

On the one hand, throughout his many articles on Villa, Tagliaferri insists on the allusiveness of Villa’s work, yet, on the other, it is he who is part of the problem: as a custodian of an archive it is his job to make the material available to those who wish to investigate it, not to hoard it and slowly leak it out whenever he feels the time and the critic are right. He awards his sympathizers and hampers those who fail to recognize his authority. Take, for example, the French translation of Villa’s poems, *Oeuvres poétiques*. Published in 1999 – after Villa had suffered a massive stroke that left the right half of his body paralyzed, at which time Tagliaferri stepped in to manage his intellectual property – this work seems more like an ode to the scholar than the poet. This is an almost exact copy of the Villa anthology (*Opere poetiche – I*) edited by Tagliaferri himself ten years before in 1989: the selection and the introduction, penned by Tagliaferri, are the same, just in French. More absurd is the fact that the only novelty are the translator’s two pages of observations: not one poem Villa composed after 1958 was included in the volume (not even the ones in French!), ignoring some of the most prolific experiments in the second half of the artist’s career.

One year after the publication of this French anthology, Tagliaferri and Bello-Minciacchi published *Zodiaco*, a short anthology collecting the poems Villa had been working on from the ‘60s onward – about 10 unpublished poems, as well as the entire collections of *Verboracula* (1981) *Le mûra di t;éb;é* (1981), *Geometria reformata* (1990) – which partially fills this gap.

⁹ In his *Il clandestino*, Tagliaferri mentions a handful of works authored by Villa but does not provide any information on where to find them, nor does he mention them in any of his bibliographies. Furthermore, as found in Cecilia Bello Minciacchi’s “Renovatum Mundiloquium: sul latino di Emilio Villa” (in *il Verri*, n.7-8, novembre 1998, p.73), there exist around one hundred of Villa’s *Sibyllae* that still remain unedited, yet they are not found in the two official Villa archives.

Thus, we must ask ourselves why none of the poems ever made into the French anthology, when it is so blatantly apparent that so much new material was available? The fact is that one glance at any of Villa's bibliographies will show that from the time Tagliaferri began his charge as custodian he has edited and introduced more than 10 volumes concerning Villa's work, while those edited by others are few and far between. It goes without saying that Villa's intentions were once again ignored by one man's selfish efforts to exercise his cultural authority, and this proves especially deplorable when one reads the closing statements of Tagliaferri's introduction to his biography on Villa: "Essa è stata scritta per stimolare altri a fare meglio di me e a continuare un discorso che, in ogni caso, andava iniziato e ora va continuato" [This was written to prompt others to do better than myself and to carry on a discourse that needed to be started and now must continue].¹⁰

Before further delving further into Villa's criticism at large, we must state that it is just as scarce as the primary text themselves, and this for three reasons in particular: the aforementioned "obscurity" of the texts (either self-inflicted, cultivated by the custodians, or the result of laziness); the great erudition they manifest, which presents various challenges to those who read them; and finally the problems inherent in advancing a poet with whom nobody is familiar, one who has been ignored by almost all the literary anthologies over the last fifty years. To put it plainly: a marginalized figure has inevitably led to an equally marginalized criticism.

To use such a term in describing Villa's place among the poetic canon of the 20th century may seem a bit dramatic, but strangely enough, his work has been intentionally kept on the fringe. To insert such a prolific figure within this canon would mean to greatly disrupt the status quo and consequently would require a redrafting of all coordinates used to survey the recent

¹⁰ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino*, etc., p. 10.

poetic history in Italy. For example, Villa's work represents a major link between the first and the so-called neo-avant-garde: he elaborated not only upon the experiments of Marinetti and a few other Futurists, but also those of the first European avant-garde in general (Dadaism, Surrealism, etc.), while most critics maintain there is a gap of twenty years between the two groups. Villa also acts as a sort of un-proclaimed heir to the work of Ungaretti: he followed his *linguistic* engagement (with its strong emphasis on etymology and philology) and his choice to experiment in languages other than Italian. However, and who knows why such a ridiculous notion is still upheld, Ungaretti is generally viewed as the father of the Hermetics: while this poetic group chose to follow his *mal de vivre*, they did little to advance *la meraviglia della parola*. Furthermore, Villa wrote verse in dialect years before Pasolini made it fashionable, and was an Italian critic responsible for launching some of the biggest names in art. And the list goes on... Furthermore, as the appeal to study poetry dwindles more and more in light of certain academic trends (i.e. cinema, feminism, immigration, trans-whatever, etc.) major scholars in our field have become more set in their ways, grasping tightly onto the status quo out of fear that too much change might cast an already precarious field into oblivion.

This holds particularly true for established critics who have written extensively on the 'experimental' poetry of the second half of the last century: they have spent careers working on the genre and are not about to allow the late emergence of a figure like Villa (or Edoardo Cacciatore¹¹) to unravel what they worked so hard to establish. In other words, it is simply easier

¹¹ Although a rather different breed of poet than Villa, but equally prolific, Edoardo Cacciatore (1912-1996) has also been excluded from almost all the anthologies dedicated to 20th century Italian poetry. The current situation regarding his critical reception is even more deplorable than Villa's: although there does exist a volume of his complete poetic works, studies of it can be counted on one hand.

to ignore him than to muster the humility to rethink their own ideas about state of poetry in those years; everything is neatly packaged and that is how they like it.

Take, for example, Villa's anticipation of the reduction of the poetic 'I' theorized by the *Novissimi*: to acknowledge the fact that another poet had already anticipated one of the *Novissimi*'s founding principles some twenty years before they theorized it on paper, has been interpreted by the critic Niva Lorenzini as threat to the sanctity of her beloved group. And as dear as the *Novissimi* are to the author of this tirade, it still does not prohibit him from ignoring the obvious and giving recognition where it is due. And her opposition to proposing such a thing: Villa never openly declared or outlined anything about the reduction of the "I," whereas Giuliani did. Just because Villa was not theorizing this reduction (which, we will see, wasn't entirely the case) does not mean the operation carries less weight. That is like saying Leopardi's *Infinito* isn't a psychological poem because the field had not been established at the time he composed it: just because something does not sport a label does not mean it is not a vital part of the artistic process.

Those who have had the courage to take on the *monstrum* that is Emilio Villa have seen their research issued in low numbers by independent publishers, and the more important volumes dedicated to the poet did not last long on the shelves and are mostly now out of print. For our purposes here, we will quickly list, and subsequently analyze, the most important critical volumes on Villa: Tagliaferri's edition of *Opere poetiche* (an anthology of Villa's poetry up to the late 50s with an introduction by the critic/editor), his *Emilio Villa. Opere e documenti* (an essay by Tagliaferri and some reprints of Villa's visual art), and his *Il clandestino: Vita e opere di Emilio Villa* (a bio/bibliography); Bello-Minciacchi's *Zodiaco* (an anthology of Villa's poetry after the 50s with essays by the editor and Tagliaferri); Claudio Parmiggiani's, *Emilio Villa:*

Poeta e scrittore (which contains an ample sampling of Villa's various artistic endeavors such as poems, the introduction to his translation of the Bible, unpublished writings, and visual pieces, critical essays, as well as the most up-to-date bibliography)¹²; Gian Paolo Renello's *Segnare un secolo. Emilio Villa: la parola, l'immagine* (the proceedings of a conference on Villa held at the University of Salerno in 2005); and a monographic issue of the literary journal *il Verri* (collecting critical essays as well as four unpublished poems, and guest edited by Tagliaferri). Preceding this work by twenty-four years was a similar monographic issue of the journal *Uomini e idee* edited by Luciano Caruso and Stelio Maria Martini in 1975 (containing essays by Villa's close friends and collaborators and important unpublished poems from the late 50s and early 60s). Lastly, Gianni Grana authored a dizzying volume entitled *Babele e il Silenzio: genio "orfico" di Emilio Villa. La neg-azione apoetica: caos e cosmos, vertigini e metàstasi della parola nell'era telematica* in 1991. This seven hundred page study will not be considered here for it too closely resembles the Babel its title implies: dragging in everything under the sun, it lacks any unifying thread and thus creates a confusion that deters rather than invites readers. In other words, it is much more productive to delve into the abyss of Villa himself, rather than the one Grana creates alongside it. The volume does open, however, with an important bibliography listing many critical essays on Villa's work published in rather obscure journals prior to 1991.

Opere Poetiche-I: Edited under the supervision of the poet himself, this anthology includes Villa's artistic production from 1934 to 1958 (with the exception of a few poems published in 1980; which leaves quite a gap between the selections): one text from *Adolescenza*; the complete collections of *Oramai* and *E ma dopo*; the individual poems *Sì, ma lentamente*,

¹² This volume was difficult to find even when it was in print for bookstores in Italy shelved it under art and not poetry because of its association with Claudio Parmiggiani.

Comizio 1953, Diciasette variazioni; selections from *Heurarium, 3 ideologie*, and finally *Verboracula*.

This last collection was originally published in the 1981 issue of the magazine *Tauma*. The selections reprinted in Tagliaferri's edition are poems to which Villa attached speciously early composition dates. Written in Latin, supposedly between 1930 and 1939, while he attended seminary school and was also composing *Adoloscenza* in Italian, the poem's dates would indicate a rather precocious Villa. However, these poems are all too similar to his experiments carried out in Latin in the 70s and early eighties. Given these textual similarities and the fact that Villa was famous for throwing off critics by renaming, re-dating, and even "re-translating" his work, some believe that these early Latin poems were in fact composed much later.¹³ Furthermore, as I recently discovered, the version of *Comizio 1953* included in this anthology is incomplete. There exists a longer version, of just more than two pages to be exact, published in the journal *Quaderno* in 1962, which offers a very different read. Whether its existence was unknown to the editor or intentionally ignored by Villa, the complete 1962 text has been translated for this dissertation.

Although Tagliaferri's introduction to the anthology, *Parole silenziose*, provides a useful overview of the poetic work of Emilio Villa, it lacks substance with regard to his early collections in Italian and instead seems to give prominence to his later multi-linguistic experiments. For example, Tagliaferri states, concerning *Oramai*, that "La tendenza alla contaminazione tra toni e linguaggi diversi [...] è già in atto, ma con misura..."¹⁴ Without

¹³ For a more in-depth analysis on this question, see Cecilia Bello-Minciacchi's essay *Tentazione e temibilità del linguaggio* in E.V. *Zodiaco*, Roma: Empiria, 2000.

¹⁴ A. Tagliaferri, *Parole silenziose*, in *Emilio Villa: Opere poetiche – I*, Roma: Coliseum, 1989, p.4.

furnishing any textual examples as to why this may be true, the critic is satisfied with only hinting at a mild contamination of languages in order to squeeze these early collections into the overall framework of his argument and quickly moves to focus on the Fifties onward.

Zodiaco: The selections comprising this volume fill the gap left open by *Opere Poetiche* between the 1950s and 1990s. The first half includes poems in Latin, French, and Italian, as well as the long poem *Letanie*, originally published in *Beato Creatore*, a volume of poetry and prose edited by Villa together with Mario Lunetta in 1984. Judging from the original version, Villa made no effort to correct any typographical oversights. Therefore, as it was transferred from one edition to another, the poem was heavily redacted and restructured in order to render it more legible. However, in an attempt to clean up the pieces, certain “educated guesses” were made that may have strayed from the author’s original intentions. Nevertheless, this poem, in my opinion, serves as the finest example of the poet’s attempt to create a work in which words are stripped down to the mere phonetic function.

In his essay opening the first section of *Zodiaco*, Tagliaferri provides an important observation that allow us to reconstruct a timeline in which Villa’s interest in translating the first five books of the Bible began to shape the poetics of his own verse in Italian:

[...] non occorre particolare acume per notare come in *Oramai* (1947), la prima raccolta poetica villiana importante, gli impulsi alla libertà, gli avidi riferimenti al mondo profano [...] releghino la religiosità nell’ordine dell’esteriorità, anche quando il tragico attraversamento della guerra inducono l’autore ad assumere toni dolenti o addirittura cupi, mentre permane la sostanziale latitanza di un’ispirazione evangelica. [...] Più tardi [...] Villa si inventa i propri momenti epifanici, piega deliberatamente le citazioni bibliche ai fini della propria poetica, escogita la volontà di appropriarsi del lessico religioso per ritorcerlo contro il suo uso convenzionale. Si delinea così, in concomitanza non casuale con la rivisitazione sistematica dei testi biblici iniziata nel 1953, il paradosso per cui la scrittura villiana si fa carico di una portata propriamente religiosa quando, ormai lontana dal mondo del seminario e dalle sue coazioni catechistiche, trova ispirazione nelle fonti delle religioni antiche morte insieme con le lingue nelle quali si era espressa la ricerca del sacro agli albori delle culture mediterranee e medio-orientali.¹⁵

¹⁵ A. Tagliaferri, *Zodiaco*, a cura di C. Bello and A. Tagliaferri, Roma: Empiria, 2000, pp.9-10.

According to Tagliaferri, references to the Bible can be found as early as *Oramai* – Villa’s “first important poetic collection” – yet he did not actually appropriate, reinvent, and reformulate biblical quotations for the benefit of his own poetic ends until around 1953, as he began to “revisit” biblical texts when he was already out of seminary school. Thus, if we follow the critic’s statements, *Adolescenza* (1934), *Oramai* (1947), and *E ma dopo* (1950) do not harmonize with Villa’s sudden appropriation of the Bible in 1953. However, if we look at the texts themselves the case is the opposite. The fact is that Tagliaferri is trying very hard to make his case that Villa was similar to James Joyce in his treatment of the Bible: both received a religious education and eventually left and only then were they free to start “bending” the Bible for their own poetic means. Such a comparison between the two writers may be justified, yet I fail to understand why Tagliaferri feels the need to paint Villa as a sort of post-1953 rebel in order to do so. Couldn’t Villa have just as easily appropriated the Bible for his own poetics when he was younger, while he was actually attending seminary school?

And if the texts found in Villa’s first three collections were not enough to prove his appropriation of the Hebrew Bible from very early on, we could also take a closer look at Villa’s biography (authored by Tagliaferri himself), as well as his bibliography to see that the critic’s statements just do not add up. From the biography we read, specifically regarding his time in seminary school:

Da un punto di vista linguistico la predilezione per il latino costruirebbe il viatico ideale per il seminarista se questi non nutrice anche un precoce e insaziabile interesse per le lingue semitiche antiche [...], lasciando trapelare una irrequietezza intellettuale che i suoi educatori non gradiscono. Tra le mura di un seminario, filologia e fede si devono condizionare a vicenda, e non era concepibile che un ragazzo, per quanto ingegnoso e volenteroso, fosse lasciato libero di accedere a letture non pilotate dai custodi dell’ortodossia.¹⁶

¹⁶ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino* etc., pp.16-17.

Then it would seem that Villa was not only acting like a rebel within the walls of the seminary school, consulting texts without, as Tagliaferri states, the guidance of orthodoxy, but was also developing a strong interest in those pre-biblical Semitic languages that would serve as the basis for his translations of the Hebrew Bible. Thus it is safe to say that the very same parameters Tagliaferri uses to justify his benchmark of 1953 also apply to twenty years before, when Villa published *Adolescenza* in 1934, while in seminary school.¹⁷

Additionally, in the previous quote from *Zodiaco*, Tagliaferri slyly inserts the word “revisit” when referring to Villa’s translation of the Bible and the influence it had on the poetics of his texts from the Fifties. At that time, Villa embarked on translating the *entire* Pentateuch, yet his biography demonstrates that pieces of this translation had already been published in 1947, in his *Antico teatro ebraico. Giobbe e Cantico dei Cantici*. And, in that very same year, Villa also published his second poetic collection *Oramai*. Thus, while Villa was working on translating parts of the Bible, he was also composing experimental poetic texts in Italian. Given the fact that many of the statements Villa makes regarding his early biblical translations – concerning aspects of anti-revelation, the encrustations the text has accumulated over time, the lacunae etc. –

¹⁷ Although there are no direct biblical citations in *Adolescenza*, the influence of Villa’s study of the ancient languages that contributed to the early formation of the Pentateuch are evident. For example, alongside the title page of this collection we find Villa’s forthcoming publications, which include projects like: *Nuova metafisica*, *Folle antiche e moderne*, *Antologia della lirica semitica*, *Linguae phoeniciae gramatica*, and *Grammatica dei dialetti cananei*. More specifically, after a close reading of the texts, we find there is an underlying theme of a search for the origins, for that abysmal space from which the poet performs a linguistic “genesis.” As we will discuss at length later in this study, Villa saw this abysmal space in the lacunae of ancient texts, which he would reproduce in his own poetry. In *Adolescenza* these “abysses” are either explicitly evoked, as in *Terra* (“La terra si comunica a l’anima con una gioia d’abissi [...]”) or must be read between the lines, as evidenced by a repetition of the preposition *tra* throughout the collection, as in *Specchio di pini sul lago* (Sacerdote / Del tempo eterno, che vegeta / Tra ramo e ramo, / Stella e stella, / Onda e onda). In his two subsequent collections, Villa used these linguistic “gaps” more prominently, even puncturing the physical typography of the page. For the latter see page 201 .

resemble those found in his introduction to the later translation of the entire Five Books (revisited in 1953), it is not impossible to assume that the same biblical influence was manifested in Villa's poetics of *Oramai* and thus already well in place when he began the subsequent collection of *E ma dopo*.¹⁸ Furthermore, both while translating *Proverbs* and *Job*, and composing his own poetry in the Forties, Villa's philological training in ancient languages had strengthened throughout his studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. All of which points to the fact that he had more tools not only to help guide him through these ancient texts, but to also capitalize on their literary forms in order to enhance his own poetics.

The second half of *Zodiaco*, edited and introduced by Cecilia Bello Minciocchi, collects three of Villa's most important later collections: *Verboracula*, *Geometria reformata*, and *le mûra di te;b;e*. This version of *Verboracula* includes the poems previously published in both *Opere poetiche* and *Tauma* as well as a number of unpublished visual pieces. By reprinting *Geometria reformata* the editor made available one of the most interesting and most rare texts from Villa's later oeuvre. The original manuscript may be found at the Maramotti museum in Reggio Emilia and was only reproduced in a limited run of seventy copies in 1990. Here, Villa weaves a poem in Latin around the visual works of Claudio Parmiggiani included in a brochure from one of the artist's shows in Zurich. Equally rare is the last collection dotting this section, *le mûra di te;b;e*, originally printed in 1981 in one hundred and fifty copies. The volume includes Villa's original Greek as well as his own Italian translations of them.

The most important accompaniment to the poems in this volume is Bello-Minciocchi's essay introducing the second half. Here she delves into Villa's "macaronic" Latin, highlighting

¹⁸ For further evidence of biblical citations see the long poem *Sì, ma lentamente*, composed during the 40s, *Natus de muliere, brevis vivens* in *Oramai*, and *E ma dopo* in *E ma dopo*. For the aforementioned lacunae, see the syntactical breaks of *Pezzo 1941* in *Oramai* and the typographical spaces of *Linguistica* and *Astronomia* in *E ma dopo*.

how the poet revives this “dead language” through the creation of many neologisms, as well as how he employs different forms of Latin, shifting seamlessly between, for example, a classical Latin to a more medieval one. Furthermore, she combines her textual analyses with the alluring approach of comparing Villa’s poetic language to that of ancient sibyls:

[...] in certe durevoli culture del Mediterraneo, il linguaggio [è] stato collegato alla genesi stessa dell’universo, al vero “essere” delle cose. La scelta di una scrittura che rievoca le antiche divinazioni e si proponga in forme di difficile lettura, scopertamente enigmatiche o sibilline, implica la negazione o lo sbarramento del passaggio transitivo del significato nel significante. [...] Giocando sulla (o contro la) trasparenza semantica, enigma ed oracolo tendono ad esibire il significante e a manipolare, velare o propriamente dissimulare e nascondere il significato. E nel fare questo portano in scena il dramma del linguaggio incapace di *comprendere* – anche nel senso fisico di contenere – le cose.¹⁹

Like a sibyl, an oracle, a soothsayer, a shaman, a god, etc, Villa furnishes the signifier but not the signification. This is all part of the enigmatic game the poet plays in order to maintain that constant flux of meaning within his work. While readers are explicitly made aware of the poetic divinations that await them in poems in Latin or Greek, or in a collection explicitly titled *Sibyllae*, they may not know that the same linguistic games are already laid out for them in the early collections of *Oramai* and *E ma dopo*. Although Bello-Minciacchi, like Tagliaferri before her, is one of those Villa critics who gives prominence to one language over another, maintaining that Villa refused to write in his native Italian and created more worth while experiments in Latin, we can use her own analysis to prove that the same techniques are present in Villa’s Italian, demonstrating that all languages were treated the same.

In order to clarify our point, let’s look at a passage from Andrea Camilleri’s, detective story *La prima indagine di Montalbano*, in which the author puts his own amusing spin on the age-old tale regarding the Sybil’s response to soldiers asking if they will ever return from war:

¹⁹ C. Bello, “Tentazione e temibilità del linguaggio,” in E. Villa *Zodiaco* etc., p. 67.

[...] aveva dato un responso chiaro e preciso, meglio assai di quelli della Sibilla cumana o della Pizia o del dio Apollo a Defli, in quanto i responsi della Sibilla o della Pizia o del dio di Apollo abbisognavano sempre dell'interpretazione dei sacerdoti e quasi mai le diverse interpretazioni combaciavano tra loro. "Ibis redibis non morieris in bello" faceva la Sibilla al soldato che stava per partire per la guerra. E ti saluto e sono. Ma era necessario metter una virgola o prima o dopo di quel *non* perchè il soldato sapesse se ci lasciava la pelle in battaglia o se se la scapolava. E indovì andava la virgola era compito dei sacerdoti che davano la loro interpretazione a secondo dell'abbondanza dell'offerta.²⁰

Already in Villa's early collections interpretation depends on where readers place a comma, how they link a subject to a predicate, or how they recombine the parts within an individual word itself. These linguistic games invite readers to intervene and shape the materiality of the language Villa has laid out before them. And it does not matter how varied the different interpretations based on different re-combinations may be; actually such an outcome is welcomed; it preserves the tension of the text and the proliferation of possible meanings.

Often, in ancient cultures, the improper interpretation of these enigmas could set in motion a chain of dire consequences. Take, for example, Oedipus' answer to the Sphinx's riddle: 'What walks on three legs in the morning, two in the afternoon, and three at night?' By providing what was thought to be the correct answer (i.e. man), the protagonist of the myth actually fell into a trap that led him to fulfill the tragic prophecy: to enter Thebes, take his father's crown, marry his mother, and so on. As Cecilia Bello states regarding this matter:

L'enigma funziona come una sfida e come una trappola linguistica, l'oracolo si propone come concessione, dono di un dio, risposta del dio ad una domanda umana, eppure anch'esso può funzionare come una trappola, può essere congegnato in modo tanto ambiguo da diventare, se male interpretato, cause di rovina inesorabile per più generazioni.²¹

Of course, with regard to Villa's poetry these ancient Greek myths involving enigmas may be used metaphorically with regard to the fate of "interpretation" within his texts, in that the poet at

²⁰ A. Camilleri, "La prima indagine di Montalbano," in *La prima indagine di Montalbano* (2004), Milano: Mondadori, 2012, p. 113.

²¹ C. Bello, "Tentazione e temibilità del linguaggio," in E. Villa *Zodiaco* etc., p. 68.

times lays out traps for his readers. They make a choice of which thread to follow, and may find that it leads nowhere, causing them, in the end, to go back and start all over.

We could say that Villa's poetry, as early on as *Oramai*, is a highly sophisticated version of the *Choose your own adventure* novels for children, in which the reader is given choices at the end of every chapter; 'if you would like the protagonist to battle the pirates, turn to page 33, if you want him to flee and rescue the damsel in distress, turn to page 77.' Depending on how the reader turned the pages would decide the end of the story. But the curious readers, inevitably dissatisfied with the results, would turn back to find out in what other ways the plot could have gone. While Villa gives his readers the same options, the major difference is that the end never comes, the story, or rather the chain of signification, goes on and on.

In a sense, this is also the scope of this study: to go back to the beginning, to Villa's Italian poems, bearing in mind his translation of the Hebrew Bible, and to start all over again, in the hope that it will open up new threads of interpretation. One of the most important scholars on Villa, Bello Minciocchi, has provided the best and, for the most part the only serious textual analyses on Villa's work in other languages, but on numerous occasions she has downplayed Villa's work in Italian. We shall add two more examples to those we have already cited above.

The first example comes from the opening line of her "*Vox labyrinthae. Quattro Sibyllae di Emilio Villa*": "[...] Villa ha consumato un'immedicabile scissura con l'italiano [...] ha lasciato la lingua ufficiale della propria nazione d'origine per scrivere in francese e in latino, mescolandovi il greco, l'inglese, e parole di un italiano inautentico."²² Just looking at Villa's bibliography, it is easy to see that he continued to write in Italian, even an "authentic" one,

²² C. Bello, "*Vox Labyrinthae. Quattro Sibyllae di Emilio Villa*," in *Avanguardia*, 8, anno II, 1998, p.1.

throughout his life, either in his poetry, art criticisms, or in his translations. Yet further along in her essay, Bello-Minciacchi provides a reason why Villa would abandon his mother tongue: “[...] lo scarto dall’italiano è anche scarto dalle poetiche tradizionali italiane.”²³ Yet, Villa’s poetics hold many affinities with those of other Italian authors, both traditional and non-traditional. Furthermore, in this regard, I tend to agree with Adriano Spatola: “L’erudizione gioca un ruolo importante nella poesia di Villa, un ruolo magnetico e magmatico: ribolle al di sotto di ogni verso e di ogni sillaba, lava destinata a cancellare le Pompei tranquille al sole dei nostri giorni.”²⁴ Fundamental to being a truly experimental poet is this erudition: one must first be aware of the tradition that came before him in order to either erase it or elaborate on it. Villa, knowledgeable in over five thousand years of literary tradition, was well aware of the Italian one, and appropriated from it what he needed and ignored what he did not.

And the second example comes from her “*Hupokritam vocem*, in margine a *Sibylla* (metastatica)”:

[...] alla mescolazione delle lingue morte e vive si dedica soprattutto a partire degli anni Cinquanta, decennio inaugurato per Villa da un produttivo e vivace soggiorno in Brasile, e fertilissimo sul piano delle traduzioni e della relazione creativa ad una lingua, l’italiano, ai suoi occhi sempre meno soddisfacente e scarsamente utilizzabile sotto il profilo letterario.²⁵

Yet most of Villa’s experimental works were in fact produced in Italian throughout the Fifties: *Diciassette variazioni su temi proposti per una pura ideologia fonetica* (1955), *3 ideologie da piazza del popolo / senza l’imprimatur* (1958), and *Comizio 1953* (1959), just to name a few.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁴ A. Spatola, “Cosmogonia pubblica e privata,” in *Uomini e Idee*, Anno XVIII, n. 2/4, Ottobre 1975, p. 60.

²⁵ C. Bello, “*Hupokritam vocem*, in margine a *Sibylla* (metastatica),” in *Atelier*, 45, anno XII, marzo 2007, p. 20.

Here, we shall repeat, we will use the same tools with which Bello-Minciacchi performs her important textual analyses on Villa's "macaronic" poems on those of his Italian; in a sense, turning her own weapons against her in order to prove that Villa's Italian is the beginning of a process of evolution that continues into his other languages. For example, after having argued, in her "*Vox labyrinthae*," that Villa's post-1952 mélange of ancient and modern languages is the natural consequence of his translations of the Hebrew Bible, the *Odyssey*, the *Enuma Elish*, etc., Bello-Minciacchi outlines a list of literary devices that characterize Villa's poetics in this sphere: "E tutta la sua rara, singolare cultura letteraria e linguistica – grammaticale, sintattica, lessicale – viene ad investire il dettato poetico, a sostanziarlo nella sonorità, nel ritmo, negli inusitati incroci etimologici, nelle neoformazioni ibride."²⁶ Yet sound, rhythm, intersecting etymologies, hybrid neo-formations (or neologisms created through the clashing of different word parts) are also the defining qualities investing Villa's poetic diction in Italian. And further along in the same essay:

Nelle *Sibyllae* [...] la complessità dell'interpretazione letterale è dovuta principalmente alle sedimentazioni semantiche del dettato poetico: la parola è pluralmente contaminata, imbastardita, riportata ai suoi mediterranei incunaboli fonetici e morfologici. È talvolta scomposta in parti diversamente significanti, è replicata in minime variazioni ortografiche, è sillabata in ossessivo andamento litanico.²⁷

And an equally vital observation, found in her "*Hupokritam vocem*," in which the critic identifies "[...] fenomeni di ipercaratterizzazione latina o greca dati dall'uso di 'h' o di 'y' non etimologiche o da concrezioni verbali tendenti ad una sorta di 'magnificazione o distorsione archeo/etimologica.'"²⁸ Again these are insightful observations that will help us to further identify the same phenomena in Villa's Italian. In fact, we can take Bello-Minciacchi's analysis one step

²⁶ C. Bello, "*Vox Labyrinthae*. Quattro *Sibyllae* di Emilio Villa," in *Avanguardia*, etc., p. 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.5.

²⁸ C. Bello, "*Hupokritam vocem*, in margine a *Sibylla* (metastatica)," in *Atelier*, etc., p. 22.

further and add that in his early collections the poet also tends to “Italianize” ancient languages, re-writing these archeo/ etymologies according to the phonetics of his mother tongue.

Opere e documenti: Compiled by Tagliaferri after Bruno Corà organized an exhibition of Villa’s visual art pieces in Prato in 1996, this work resembles more an elaborate brochure than an actual critical volume. Although possibly more expansive at the exhibit itself, the selections reproduced here are rather slim (twelve in all). However, they do demonstrate the poet’s predilection for language no matter if he was creating literature or a work of visual art. These pieces could be described as “language collages” in which the clashing of different languages is emphasized more physically on the canvas than it could be on the printed page. Of all the selections, probably the most important is a photograph of Villa’s “visual” elaboration of his collection, *le mûra di t;éb;é*, previously held at the Galleria Multimedia di Brescia in 1981. Here, the poet rendered a collection of his own poems in ancient Greek into Italian then tore the originals to shreds, sealed them in a plastic sphere, and hung them alongside his translations. This intriguing piece raises many questions concerning issues of both traditional and inter-semiotic translations, not to mention the poet’s role as a sort of sibyl, safe-guarding the mystery of the original language by sealing it within a plastic bag. Finally, Corà’s brief introduction to the volume makes way for a lengthy essay by Tagliaferri, which dominates the entire brochure, for its French translation is also included. While Tagliaferri’s contribution mostly traces Villa’s involvement in the art world as both critic and artist, it does, on one occasion, imply that Villa’s poetry and art criticism are not isolated interests: “[...] la poesia si insinua naturalmente nel dettato ‘critico’ e finisce per guidarne il percorso”.²⁹ However, to what extent these two interests

²⁹ A. Tagliaferri, “Segno, materia, e scrittura negli ‘oggetti di poesia’ di Emilio Villa,” in E.V. *Opere e documenti*, Milano: Skira, 1996, p. 18.

are interrelated has not, to the best of my knowledge, been tackled through any comparative analysis.

Il clandestino. Vita e opere di Emilio Villa: Authored by Tagliaferri, this work mainly concerns the poet's biography. Although this study will not rely on the poet's personal history to interpret his texts, it will consider Tagliaferri's observations regarding Villa's constant attempts to obscure his biography. Take, for example, the fact that he tried to cover up the year of his birth, 1914: "egli sostiene sempre di essere nato nel settembre del 1915 [...] e siccome più tardi gli archivi dell'anagrafe andarono in fumo nel corso di un bombardamento aereo, oggi non è più possibile stabilire come andarono effettivamente le cose."³⁰ The intentional sabotage of one's personal history is not an entirely new phenomenon in literature: it has long served to skew the line between fiction and reality, as well as to reduce the presence of the authorial "I" within the text itself.

In fact, Villa took this reduction of the "I" quite literally, which, on some occasions, causes Tagliaferri's *Il clandestino* to resemble more an elaborate bibliography than a traditional biography, not because the author chose to forgo Villa's personal life but rather because it is impossible to know the details about what the poet was actually up to: "Fatte proprie le abitudini di un clandestino, [...] acquisisce uno stile di vita che gli diventa presto congeniale: compare, se ne va, d'improvviso ricompare dopo assenze lunghe, e sempre fa perdere le proprie tracce."³¹ In many ways, Villa's lifestyle was intentionally allusive, for he knew that his biography could be used as an interpretative key to his poetry, one that often smothers rather than revives the language of texts.

³⁰ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino*, etc., p. 11.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

For example, critics have often relied on the traumatic events of Eugenio Montale's youth in order to explain the fragile tone of his *Ossi di seppia* or on the fact that certain poets openly admit that their work was based on actual personal events. After reading these exegeses, the poem's luster and allure suddenly vanishes. In order for the work of art to truly thrive, and, in the case of Villa, for the language of poetry to perform its function, the author must be kept out of it, and the way to do this is to hide one's personal history altogether, both inside and outside the text. If one speaks to Villa's many friends and collaborators, they will inevitably paint rather incompatible pictures of the poet, as if he were a man of different personas, creating more confusion than clarity. In the end, Villa's strategy worked, for the reader or critic can only speculate as to his biography, to that which is external to the poem, and therefore must only rely only on its language (similar to how nothing is known of the authors of the Old Testament or ancient myths and therefore one is left to tackle only the language of these texts).

As Tagliaferri repeats throughout his book, Villa's elusiveness also had an impact on his personal relationships, which in turn affected the preservation of his work. In 1970, after breaking up with his companion at the time "una grande cassa colma di manoscritti, cataloghi e traduzioni vengono affidati a un deposito sul Lungotevere, ma andrà persa a causa del mancato pagamento del canone affitto."³² Therefore, in order to remain critically unbiased, we must say that the relationship between our author and his work was not always an intentional reduction of the authorial presence by giving away manuscripts, manipulating composition dates, or cover the tracks of his own biography: in some cases economic hardships, or his complete indifference (and at times almost hatred) for his own work, caused it to fall through the cracks.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Besides these anecdotes concerning Villa's life (some verifiable, others mythical), Tagliaferri posits a few observations regarding his poetics that, in spite of the fact that they generally linger on the surface, nevertheless serve as possible leads to be pursued and/or adjusted by future critics. For example, he makes a connection between Villa and Leopardi: "Quel senso doloroso della condizione umana, e che in Leopardi, e in Villa stesso, si manifesta come dramma denunciato e reso tollerabile attraverso il linguaggio dell'arte."³³ Certainly such a comparison is justified, yet if we examine the arch of Villa's artistic production we find that he only alludes to the 'painful human condition' in *Adolescenza* and *Oramai*, and only sparingly so, and especially in the latter, mostly in reference to the Second World War. After these two collections, any trace of this tragic side of the human condition completely vanishes, and even when it does appear in his early poems, it can in no way be compared to Leopardi's *mal di vivere*, existential crisis, or cosmic angst.

There are similarities between these two authors with regard to the role poetry plays within the drama of human existence, but there is also a major difference. Leopardi used verse to transcend this painful human condition as it slowly degraded from its origins to his present. However, he made his existence 'tolerable' by evoking a nostalgia in order to recuperate things lost, momentarily transforming himself from an elegiac figure into a poet that, through language, reshapes the world around him (of which *L'infinito* and *La ginestra* act as perfect examples). It is not by chance that many 20th century poets looked to Leopardi as a sort of experimental predecessor, for he was one of the few who, after Cavalcanti, was able to turn this existential pessimism into a productive energy through the language of poetry.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Yet while Leopardi only occasionally recuperates the origins he bemoans, Villa goes straight to the source, circumventing the nostalgic concept of perishing time altogether. In Villa, there is no time between the origins and the present, yet rather the two are one in the same; his poetry does not recover that which has been lost, but rather functions as an origin itself, generating signification that has yet to exist, not the nostalgia behind a moment that has already happened. Thus, Villa's poetry does not act as a means for 'tolerating' or transcending the present, but rather for charging it and transforming it into a time when everything is possible. In other words, we could say that Villa revisited and elaborated upon a poetics that played only a minor role in Leopardi.

This brings us to another fundamental point that must be kept in mind when examining Villa's language: it does not aim to recover, emulate, express, or capture the essence of the origins, but rather *to originate the origins*. However, in his introduction to Villa's *Sibyllae*, Tagliaferri would seem to suggest otherwise: "[...] in Villa l'inattingibilità dell'origine si sovrappone all'irrimediabilità di una perdita individuale, il crollo dell'omnipotenza narcisica; e la ricerca della genuina espressione primaria del linguaggio corrisponde al rimpianto per il paradiso perduto dell'infanzia."³⁴ As found in many Italian poets and thinkers, the literary *topos* of origins implies a pure state from which man moves further away and to which he is striving to return; a desire to re-enter the earthly paradise or reach the promise land. Specifically with regard to language, this would suggest also a recovery of the truth, i.e. that language no longer falls short of the mark in expressing what it means to say, but rather perfectly aligns with the truth that has been concealed from man since his inception. Thus, for certain artists, the language of the work is but a simulacrum or bastardization of Language and the inability to capture it is

³⁴ A. Tagliaferri, "L'enigma nella poesia e nella poetica di Emilio Villa," in E. Villa *12 Sibyllae*, Castelvetro Piacentino: Michele Lombardelli Editore, 1995, pp. 8-9.

consequently lamented. On the one hand, there is an original truth that precedes the language of art and on the other that same language fails to express it. Villa, resolves this conundrum with a simple premise: there is no truth whatsoever, and rather than bemoaning the fact, he revels in it. In other words, Villa accesses the raw material of language lying at the origins in order to create new signification in the present, to create a sort of “ancient present” if you will, not to recover any sort of truth.

Once again, as Tagliaferri elucidates: “Emilio esclude che una verità, o qualsiasi significato, preceda l’azione artistica e mette in evidenza la rilevanza di questo concetto nel primo testo su Burri, dove sostiene che questi interviene sulla materia ‘non rappresentando, ma facendo.’”³⁵ Villa’s statement regarding the work of visual artists such as Burri completely harmonizes with his own poetics: his artistic language is not intended to represent, but rather to make. We can think of Villa as a *fabbro*, as someone who manufactures language. Therefore, Villa’s concept of the origins is different from that of other poets in that it does not imply that language needs to mirror the truth of the world, but rather it acts as the stimulus for the creation of the world itself, as if the language of poetry was the origin that sets the world in motion (i.e. the fabrication of the world).³⁶

Tagliaferri, in fact, states that this artistic act can be compared to the “atto col quale la divinità creò dal nulla.”³⁷ Yet before making claims that Villa’s language *makes* rather than *represents*, before equating him to a god that creates the universe from nothing, evidence of such

³⁵ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino* etc., p. 48.

³⁶ This is a reversal of Dante’s famous statement in chapter XIII of the *Vita nuova*: “names are the consequences of things.” Rather for Villa, and many poets interested in language, things are the consequence of language.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

things must be found in the texts themselves. Given the frequency with which allusions to Genesis and the original sin appear in Villa's work, it is surprising that very few critics have tried to show how these events are reflected in his poetry, not only symbolically but also within the actual mechanisms deployed by the language itself.

Emilio Villa. Poeta e scrittore: After Tagliaferri's biography, undoubtedly the most important volume dedicated to Villa is the catalog edited by Claudio Parmiggiani following an exhibition of the poet's work held in Reggio Emilia in 2008. *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore* provides an ample sampling of the author's various artistic endeavors (poems, excerpts from his translation of the Bible, unpublished writings, and visual pieces), a range of critical essays to help guide the reader through Villa's oeuvre, as well as the most up-to-date bibliography. However, this work is also punctuated with its share of high-sounding statements that, without the support of the proper textual examples, do little to clarify Villa's linguistic experiments. For example:

Facendo saltare la struttura tradizionale e la funzione ancillarmente comunicativa, ormai in realtà opacizzata nel suo vigore significante, Villa portava la lingua a temperatura di alto forno, riducendola a corpo arroventato, prossimo alla fusione e vicino alla "confusione" babelica. Egli ne saggiava tutta la capacità di resistenza al senso residuale fino al confine del non-senso.³⁸

Or:

[...] ha scritto in una lingua morta, ha tradotto in una lingua viva, e ha esposto la morta, la lingua impossibile, nascondendo sotto gli occhi la viva, facendo tornare indietro il senso di quelle parole, impedendole a noi, lasciando ogni cosa inascoltato.³⁹

Although analyses of the texts themselves are still few and far between, when compared to the previous criticisms, some of the offerings found here are more mature and focused,

³⁸ B. Corà, "Odi verso overdosi. Una nuova economia poetica della parola," in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore*, Milano: Mazzotta, 2008, p. 69.

³⁹ N. Cagnone, "Cognizione di Emilio Villa," in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore* etc., p. 337.

especially concerning the theme of origins. Thus, rather than addressing the individual merits of each essay one by one, it would be more productive to trace this thread of origins binding the volume, which Parmiggiani begins to weave in his preface by citing Villa himself: “scrivere il silenzio a paragone della stupidità verbosa che imperversa.”⁴⁰ We must immediately ask ourselves how does one write silence and, furthermore, what does it have to do with Villa’s poetics of origins? First, it is not a matter of writing silence per se but rather of strategically placing a blank space within the text, or rather inscribing words around a silence. Second, this blank space functions as the abyss that precedes the act of creation: the nothing from which a god extracts light or, as found in a number of other creation myths, the silence from which a god begins to speak the universe.

As Giulio Busi states in his contribution to the volume concerning Villa’s translation of the Bible:

Come Nietzsche, Villa lavora al di fuori del tempo, attratto dal bagliore del giorno ultimo, e forse ancor più dalla luce aurorale dei primordi, in cui la sostanza verbale mantiene la sua incorrotta potenza. [...] La sua traduzione biblica persegue allora con metodo le lacune. I vuoti gli paiano ancor più necessari dei pieni, vengono censiti, esibiti, quasi che una litania di corrottele sia molto più evocatrice e benefica della futile apparenza di un continuum testuale.⁴¹

In a sense, we could apply one of Pascal’s philosophical statements to Villa’s language: while the word as an auroral light emerges from the nothing, it also eventually returns to it; like a pheasant in the brush, it disappears entirely from the page.⁴² Just as Villa pursues the lacunae in

⁴⁰ C. Parmiggiani, “Emilio Villa: Nuntius celatus,” in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore etc.*, p.12. Parmiggiani does not provide a source for his citation.

⁴¹ G. Busi, “Datene notizia ad Abramo il Bandito. Il laboratorio biblico di Emilio Villa,” in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore, etc.*, p. 20.

⁴² See Wallace Stevens’ *Adagia*, in *Opus Posthumous*, New York: Knopf, 1989, p. 198.

his translation of the Bible to underscore a disruption in the fluid continuum of interpretation⁴³, so he does in his poetry: at times sentences literally drop off the page, leading nowhere, into a space where the initial act of naming the world suddenly comes to a complete halt. And as the gaps left in his translation of the Bible bring out the underlying mystery of this ancient text, the ones in his poetry similarly push words onto the brink of the abyss.

In a sense, we could say that at times the poet acts as a god who out of the nothing begins to create the world through language (through completely new forms of expression and the novel meaning they provoke), while at others as a sort of devil who frustrates not only conventional language, but also his very own semantemes through the blank spaces, lacunae, or figurative tears on the page. As Tagliaferri observes in his contribution to the volume in question:

Le contorsioni e i conati espressivi della “scimmia di Dio”, come anche viene definito Satana, se Dio è il linguaggio, [...] sono imitazioni polemiche del linguaggio, ovvero ripetizione rivale della sua originarietà, della sua nascita: non godimento della sua rivelazione quale essa è, ma suo rinnovamento competitivo, a partire dal suo regressivo, e aggressivo, rovesciamento, in direzione di un in-Creato. E la parola “priva di lingua”, prebabelica, assoluta rispetto alla Storia, costituisce l’irraggiungibile ma sempre perseguito ideale di originarietà del poeta che, in quanto “creatore”, rivaleggia satanicamente con un mondo di cose-parole [...].⁴⁴

Once again we must repeat what has become a sort of mantra throughout our study thus far: without a textual example to confirm such statements the critic does nothing more than mythicize the poet. Since the question of “God’s monkey” (a.k.a. Satan) is fundamental to the theme of origins we are investigating, a few words must be spent on it here in order to begin to clarify a

⁴³ Lacunae are found in the various biblical manuscripts. Instead of filling them in, as most translators do, Villa leaves them open in his translation and, in his notes, points out the linguistic ambiguity they evoke.

⁴⁴ A. Tagliaferri, “Una introduzione alla lettura delle opere di Emilio Villa,” in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore*, etc., p. 84. Also of importance is a footnote following the critic’s observation: “Non è privo di interesse il fatto che tra le proprie carte, [...] Villa conservasse molti articoli e alcuni libri dove si parlava di dispute teologiche intorno alla natura di Satana e al ruolo assegnatogli in seno a varie eresie” (pp. 92-93).

rather complex concept that appears across Villa's oeuvre. We will provide one example that comes from Villa's *Poesia è*:

poesia è pigrizia irrigidita, con
un braccio appesa al ramo
dell'Albero della Scienza del
Bene e del Male; cioè
è una Scimmia che sta in
Brasile [...] ⁴⁵

First, Christian theology generally conceives of Satan as a simulacrum of the Creator, a fallen angel who tries to emulate Him, but since there can only be one true God, he has been forever damned for attempting to overthrow him. Second, according to the Christian belief, man is also damned for having listened to Satan and having committed the original sin: like Satan, Eve was also aroused by the thought of becoming "like God." Thus, when man thinks he knows as much as, or even better than God, he falls prey to Satan's falsehoods, and consequently also acts as a sort of "God's monkey." Third, with regard to language, it was the Christians who interpreted God's word in the Bible as revelation: the belief is that His language is infallible – the one, original language of truth – and to rival that language by proposing another that originates different meanings is to contradict, and even compete with, the word of God (or rather, in reality, the univocal meaning certain belief systems have derived from the Bible). Thus, linguistically speaking, to transgress the word of God is to act as His impostor and to betray the truth.

When it comes to Villa, however, all these statements hold little relevance. They are constructs imposed by what can be referred to as latecomers in the lengthy history of the Bible and its interpretative possibilities. As a biblical scholar trained in Sumerian and Akkadian philology (the latter sharing similar roots with other Semitic languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic), Villa was interested in the various myths of ancient pre-Judaic cultures

⁴⁵ E. Villa, *Poesia è*, in "Quaderni", n.1, Roma, Fondo Moravia 2002, p. 33.

that helped shape the narrative of the Hebrew Bible – myths that when taken into consideration while reading the Pentateuch imbue it with a great polysemy – not the redactions carried out by a younger belief system in its attempt to sew the first five books into the fabric of the New Testament. Such concepts as God, Satan, Man, and their respective “linguistic” roles within Villa’s work must be viewed in this light.

Different from the Christian belief, these ancient myths stem from a polytheistic culture. Residue of these aspects are present within the discrepancies between *Yahweh* (one god) and *Elohim* (multiple gods), in the fall of man episode of the Old Testament. If Adam and Eve became *Elohim* when their eyes opened, it would imply they became gods among other gods and that the god strolling through the garden (or oasis as Villa translated it) was indeed fallible, for the two managed to trick him. In other words, the god present in that episode is an older god with respect to the later one true God added by the Judaic culture under Moses. And since he is the god of a more ancient Sumerian or Akkadian culture, his characteristics would have been greatly different, akin to those found in a myth like *Gilgamesh*:

In *Gilgamesh*, the gods are physical forces active in the world: they act without reason and cower when their actions exceed even their control. The account in Genesis on the other hand explains the actions of the one god, who [punishes] sinful humankind, and demonstrates the omnipotence of that god, who is not frightened by his creation.⁴⁶

If these older gods were fallible and their creations sometimes spurred even out of their own control, then we could say that the same applies to their linguistic creations, that is there was no concept of one original language pre-ordained as divine truth, but rather the languages of different gods that expressed contrasting perspectives that gave rise to multiple interpretative possibilities. Villa, then, in my opinion, was not pursuing the ideal, as Tagliaferri seems to imply, of an absolute, pre-babelic language, but rather challenging the notion that such a thing

⁴⁶ See Stuart Kendall’s incredibly thought provoking introduction to his translation of *Gilgamesh*, New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2012, p. xviii.

existed, opting instead to capture the linguistic chaos of differing perspectives that constantly call the notion of an absolute language into question.

And this brings us to our next point regarding the role of Satan, which when following the Christian belief system, would be antithetical to that of the one God creator (his adversary, imposter, emulator, etc.), yet according to pre- and early biblical sources, it is in fact complementary. Let's look at the etymology of the word itself, of which in translating the Hebrew Bible Villa would have been well aware:

In the Hebrew Bible, as in mainstream Judaism to this day, Satan never appears as Western Christendom has come to know him, as leader of an "evil empire," an army of hostile spirits who make war on God and humankind alike. As he first appears in the Hebrew Bible, Satan is not necessarily evil, much less opposed to God. On the contrary, he appears in the book of Numbers and in Job as one of God's obedient servants [...]. The root *s'tn* means "one who opposes, obstructs, or acts as adversary." (The Greek term *diabolos*, later translated as "devil," literally means "one who throws something across one's path.") The *satan*'s presence in a story could account for unexpected obstacles or reversals of fortune. Hebrew storytellers often attribute misfortunes to human sin. Some, however, also invoke this supernatural character, the *satan*, who, by God's own order or permission, blocks or opposes human plans and desires. But this messenger is not necessarily malevolent. God sends him [...] to perform a specific task, although one that human beings may not appreciate; [...] Thus the *satan* may simply have been sent by the lord to protect a person from worse harm.⁴⁷

As the biblical historian Elaine Pagels clearly demonstrates, the concept of the devil as God's evil adversary is largely Christian in nature, while within Hebrew and Greek culture, the word *satan* implied an agent sent by God to disrupt human behavior (and who knows what other significance Villa himself may have found when investigating the earlier myths of early Mesopotamian cultures). Therefore, when approached according to this etymology, the role of Satan in the fall of man episode is overturned. It can now be seen as a positive disrupter who was performing for man's benefit, offering an invitation to shatter what seemed to be the only reality, to see things in a new light, to move from a passive to an active role in creating the world, to become like *Elohim*. In other words, and Villa's work shows this on numerous occasions, being

⁴⁷ E. Pagels, *The origin of Satan*, New York: Random House, 1995, pp.39-40.

“banned” from the garden was a good thing, for it opened man’s reality onto a variety of possibilities (and indeed has). Furthermore, as we will discuss further along in this study, in Villa’s translation of the fall of man episode, Eve and the Serpent may have not been two separate entities, implying that the need to transgress the word of God and to find things out on our own was already hardwired onto our psychological makeup.

Now that we have attempted to clarify the ways in which the roles of god and satan were portrayed in Villa’s translation of the Hebrew Bible, we must ask ourselves what resonance their duality, or rather their synthesis, carried within the poet’s treatment of language. He is similar to a god in that he creates a language and is similar to satan in that he obstructs that same language; he prohibits it from every reaching an absolute, frustrates its meaning before it can become revelation (the very scope of his project of re-translating the Bible), and, most importantly, maintains its mystery in order for the proliferation of meaning to continue. As Cecilia Bello Minciocchi states: “La Bibbia è stata il patrimonio su cui far prova [...] dell’infranto patto tra parola divina ed umana, tra parole e cose, tra lingua e poeta. Il patrimonio letterario in cui si esprime la ribellione dell’uomo alla parola divina.”⁴⁸ In a sense, man’s eyes were opened not to pursue a linguistic ideal, or imitate the language of God, but to see and engage in the mystery that lies behind the curtain. The poet participates in the act of creating and enjoys repeating the “original sin” over and over again: he plays with language in a way that it shatters reality, builds on a new one, and then betrays its own premises. Thus, for Villa, the “fall of man” represents the ultimate linguistic transgression, while remaining in the garden, believing in one reality, and passively obeying the one word, would have been the real sin.

⁴⁸ C. Bello Minciocchi, “Prefazione,” in E. Villa *Proverbi e Cantico. Traduzioni dalla Bibbia*, Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2004, p. 27.

Segnare un secolo. Emilio Villa: la parola, l'immagine: Compiling the proceedings from a conference dedicated to the work of Emilio Villa held at the University of Salerno in 2005, this volume is strictly criticism, containing no primary texts. It opens with a short essay by Tagliaferri that is again rife with theory and scant on textual examples. The second contribution, by Simonetta Graziani, investigates Villa's translation of the Babylonian creation epic, *Enuma Elis*. After providing a historical background of this ancient myth as well as of Villa's formation in the study of ancient languages, the critic moves to briefly analyze his translation. Lacking in her analysis is, in my opinion, a comparison between Villa's version of the myth and a more canonical one (in order to highlight the singularity of the former) and any mention of what this translation has to do with the other spheres of Villa's artistic activity. As always, Cecilia Bello-Minciocchi's essay serves as an example to follow but still avoids Villa's Italian in favor of his multi-linguistic in verse. Antonio Pietropaoli's "Emilio Villa: un poeta senza poetica?" draws textual examples from Villa's poetry written in different languages (Italian included) as well as from different time periods. There are a few flaws, however, concerning his methodology. First, he tries to cram Villa's work into rather uncomfortable poetic categories such as hermeticism, neorealism, avant-garde etc. (we will deal with these issues and Pietropaoli's analysis of them in the next section of this introduction). Second, to immediately answer the question found in Pietropaoli's title, "poeta senza poetica?": no poet is without a poetics, rather, to paraphrase Luciano Anceschi, a poet has an infinite amount of poetics at his disposal. Implying Villa had no poetics only casts his work further into obscurity and ignores the *many* techniques he employed. The three remaining essays are the most pertinent to our study and are better examined here at length.

In many respects, Villa's approach to translating Homer's *Odyssey* is similar to that of the Pentateuch. In fact, in his essay "*l'Odissea di Emilio Villa*," Luigi Torraca states that "[...] i personaggi omerici sono interpretati come variazioni ipostatiche di divinità preelleniche, che hanno perduto la loro primigenia identità per un lungo processo di demitologizzazione."⁴⁹ Rather than limiting his translation to Homer's paradigm, Villa restores the thread between its characters and the pantheon of gods found at the origins of Greek culture (just as he did with the pre-Judaic cultures who contributed to the Old Testament); one that may have been apparent at the time of Homer, yet that has long been broken for the modern reader. In fact, in *The Iliad*, Homer himself seems to caution his audience that the relationship with a fantastical past was already at risk of fading into oblivion. And such warnings are voiced through the figure of Nestor, the oldest counselor among the Achaeans, who, out of all the characters in the epic, serves to remind the young warriors that the importance of their mythical past cannot be ignored:

Listen to Nestor. You are both younger than I, / and in my time I struck up with better men than you, / even you, but never once did they make light of me. / I've never seen such men, I never will again... / [...] They were the strongest mortals ever bred on earth, / the strongest, and they fought against the strongest too, / shaggy Centaurs, wild brutes of the mountains -- / they hacked them down, terrible, deadly work. / [...] they took to heart my counsels, marked my words. / So now you listen too.⁵⁰

Similar to how Nestor serves as bridge between the present and mythical past, reminding his young companions (and by extension Homer's readers) of the mythical beasts that used to roam the earth, Villa, in translating *The Odyssey*, reconnects modern readers with the mythical background that shaped its story.

⁴⁹ L. Torraca, "*L'Odissea di Emilio Villa*," in *Segnare un secolo. Emilio Villa: la parola, l'immagine*, Milano: DeriveApprodi 2007, p. 73.

⁵⁰ Homer, *The Iliad*, translated by Robert Fagles, New York: Penguin Books, 1990, Book I, 304-320.

And the poet succeeds in doing so through philological rigor: the language of his translation utilizes the signifying power of certain Greek phonemes that resonate with those of earlier myths. For example, as Torraca observes:

[...] il Villa tende a ritrovare la traccia di un nome di animale in tutti i nomi di persona, maschili o femminili, che risultano arcaici o molto antichi. Così Ὀδυσσεύς, attraverso le forme parallele Ὀλυσσεύς, Ὀλυττεύς, attestate epigraficamente, è connesso al tema ἰονλ/ἰονλιδ (da cui ἰονλος = miriapode, lombrico): in tal caso il Ὀδυσσεύς attesterebbe una fase totemica in cui Odisseo è il verme centopiedi. Odisseo, quindi, è considerato una divinità arcaica, collegata con le epifanie Πότνια primigenie nell'ambito dell'Acqua-Madre, principio di vita e principio di morte.⁵¹

Thus the name Odysseus echoes that of a character found in one of the earliest Greek creation myths, the offspring of Okeanos (a river god) and Tethys (a water goddess). By evoking such a semblance Villa reinserts the epic's main character into a lineage that begins with the mysterious origins of the world itself (the myth that generated subsequent myths). At the same time, Villa establishes a philological continuity between the creation myth and Odysseus, consequently raising hitherto unsuspected implications. After all, if we look at how the god Okeanos is described in the myth, such a connection is founded:

Ever since the time when everything originated from him he has continued to flow to the outermost edge of the earth, flowing back upon himself in a circle. The rivers, springs and fountains – indeed the whole sea – issue continually from his broad, mighty stream. When the world came under the rule of Zeus, he alone was permitted to remain in his former place – which is really not a place, but only a flux, a boundary and barrier between the world and the Beyond.⁵²

When associated with this ancient god, the trials and tribulations of the seafaring Odysseus can be seen in a new light and Homer's *Odyssey* begins to once gain reveal those layers of meaning that had been buried for centuries.

⁵¹ L. Torraca, "L' *Odisea* di Emilio Villa," in *Segnare un secolo...etc.*, p. 73. It is interesting to note how the phonetic similarities between rather disparate words (separated by either millennia or cultural-linguistic boundaries) also serve as basis for Villa's own "experimental" poetry.

⁵² C. Kerényi, "Okeanos and Tethys," in *The Gods of the Greeks*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1951, p. 15.

In general, there are two types of translations: those that remain faithful to the source language in the target language, and those that modify and expand the source to such a degree that, in certain cases, they constitute more of an original work than a translation. We could say that, on the one hand, that the “faithful” translation is based on philological rigor, basing choices on what the words of the source text meant at the time the work was created, while on the other, the “modification” pushes the meaning of the source language outside the boundaries of what the author may have originally intended. In his essay on Villa’s *Odyssey*, Torraca tends to place him in the latter category, in that his translations betray the source language for his own artistic purposes:

[...] la traduzione villiana è essa stessa opera di altissima poesia, che si pone rispetto al testo omerico non come trasferimento più o meno metamorfico, ma come ri-creazione di un testo considerato da Villa ‘fondamentalmente perduto dal punto di vista della misteriosa realtà che lo anima,’ in un linguaggio poetico originale, ‘sottratto ad automatismi di senso e restituito alle più antiche potenzialità espressive’.⁵³

Note that “an original poetic language” is Torraca’s inclusion and not part of Villa’s statement. I highlight this discrepancy because, in my opinion, Villa did not necessarily consider his translations as his own original poetic language, but rather as the work of a poet-translator who respected the poetics of the source language to the utmost degree.

I would argue that Villa creates a unique synthesis of the aforementioned translation categories: his renderings are so philologically faithful to the original that the language of its author appears completely new, thus allowing the reader to amplify the text’s meaning. By being philologically faithful, I mean that Villa respected the ambiguities of the source text (*lacunae* etc.), rather than choosing one interpretation based what may (or may not) have been dictated by the historical circumstances in which the text was produced, or by the criticism that followed.

⁵³ L. Torraca, “L’*Odissea* di Emilio Villa,” in *Segnare un secolo...etc.*, pp. 79-80. Torraca’s citations of Villa come from his *Translator’s Note* accompany his rendering of *The Odyssey*, pp. 414-441.

We must keep in mind that it is extremely difficult to tell what the actual historical circumstances surrounding these texts may have been (if we were to go back in time the encounter would most likely resemble that with an alien culture from another planet), and what the author intended his language to really mean. Who is to say that certain ambiguities, that references to ancient myths, were not in fact intentional, that they were not part of Homer's poetics (this uncertainty is even further compounded by the fact that Homer's work was part of an oral and not written tradition)? Thus, Villa's translations are faithful to the originals for he strives to reflect the mythical, mysterious quality they contained from the outset, restoring the ambiguities that created multiple interpretative options, rather than automatically accepting one interpretation that over time has come to suppress all others.

Additionally, Villa's philological choices must also be weighed against the backdrop of the cultures that preceded the texts he is translating. In other words, it wouldn't be completely fair to limit one's comparison to, in the case of Homer, the standard Ionic Greek or, in the case of the Bible, a standard Hebrew. With regard to the former, however, Torraca alerts:

Questa prospettiva villiana, pur seducente e ricca di implicazioni storico-culturali, non appare fondata su solide basi linguistiche: contro di essa potrebbe facilmente ritorcersi l'obiezione che il Villa stesso moveva ai linguisti accademici, ossia il pericolo di un falso etimologizzare e interpretare, o peggio ancora, il rischio di vagare nella 'precarietà omofonica,' come a suo giudizio accade ad alcuni orientalisti.⁵⁴

And, concerning the latter, we read a similar statement from the critic Giancarlo Lacerenza in his contribution to *Segnare un secolo*:

Villa non giunge però a uno smontaggio filologico del testo e, conseguentemente, a una proposta di ricomposizione della sua forma 'originaria': si limita al lavoro del traduttore, che non deve compiere l'edizione critica del testo di cui si sta occupando. Villa traduce la *Bibbia* così come la si intuisce al meglio del suo testo 'originale': e fra le traverse distorte o mancanti di quel relitto, di cui descrive a proprio gusto l'ipotetica fisionomia a un uditore cieco, egli non manca d'introdurre ricostruzioni e congetture; il più delle volte,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.75.

nondimeno, confinate nell'apparato, e che non possono essere apprezzate senza frequente ricorso al commento villiano.⁵⁵

It is best to put a little disclaimer on this last quote: first, it comes from a section of the essay entitled “Del metodo o l’indispensabile libertà” (promptly implying a poetic leeway on Villa’s behalf) and second, if we look at Villa’s translation of the Hebrew Bible, of which only a sliver has been published, it indeed provides ample comments, and these comments demonstrate Villa’s philological rigor, for he grounds his choices in the languages of the myths spawned by more ancient cultures that had influenced the formation of the Pentateuch (important facts that, regrettably, are missing from Lacerenza’s study). For anyone interested in exploring Villa’s translations, or even his poetry for that matter, it is essential to heed a declaration found in his “La mitologia e le sue fonti nascoste,” launched as part of an attack on Enrico Prampolini’s *La mitologia nella vita dei popoli*: “Non è un grave peccato non conoscere il sumero e l’assiro. Ma è un peccato, e un pericolo grave, volerlo nascondere.”⁵⁶ Or, in the aforementioned cases, ignore it almost entirely. Therefore, until a scholar specialized in dead languages like Akkadian, Sumerian or Ugaritic decides to either confirm or contrast the validity of Villa’s philological choices, we are just going to have to take his word for it.

In all of his artistic pursuits – whether he is writing essays on primitive art, that of his contemporaries, or translating ancient texts such as the Bible and Homer’s *Odyssey* – Villa avoids revelation and emphasizes instead the mechanisms that generate meaning, only to then betray it in order to generate yet another and so on. And it is these mechanisms that Villa recuperates from ancient texts in order to imbue his own poetry with the same signifying force.

⁵⁵ G. Lacerenza, “Villa traduttore della *Bibbia* ebraica,” in *Segnare un secolo* etc., p.63.

⁵⁶ E. Villa, “La mitologia e le sue fonti nascoste,” in *il Frontespizio*, n. 3, marzo XVI, 1938, p. 186.

For example, as Gian Paolo Renello (the only critic thus far to compare the poet's verse in Latin to actual techniques employed in the earliest forms of writing), brilliantly elucidates in his contribution to *Segnare un secolo* :

I Sumeri, cui spetterebbe il primato dell'invenzione della scrittura, compresero che si potevano trasformare logogrammi esistenti per crearne di nuovi, non solo sfruttando il segno grafico, ma anche combinandoli fra loro, in quanto ognuno poteva essere utilizzato pure per il suo valore fonetico iniziale. Attraverso processi di analogia sia visiva sia sonora essi aprirono la via alla creazione di inedite relazioni di senso fra parole anche lontane grazie a una vicinanza fonetica inizialmente non immaginata. Se da un lato questa innovazione frammentò e disseminò ulteriormente il linguaggio nelle sue infinite componenti, esso è lo stesso processo che permette a un poeta come Villa, millenni dopo, di giocare con questo sistema per dire che ogni parola è contemporaneamente punto sorgente e abisso di ogni altra, punto di accumulo e di dispersione [...], ma anche vera e propria eruzione di significanti e significati.⁵⁷

Thus, Villa appropriates the *form* and not the *content* of ancient texts; a literary technique that had been previously employed by other poets, as we shall see in our next section, but to lesser degrees.

Il Verri: Guest edited by Tagliaferri, this monographic issue dedicated to the work of Emilio Villa and published in 1998 contains 10 essays and a handful of previously unpublished texts. Principle among them is Villa's introduction to his translation of *Genesis* followed by a passage from the work itself. Besides providing a succinct history of the Pentateuch as it traveled across different cultures, languages, and denominations, this introduction supplies invaluable insight into the scope of Villa's translations, which, as we read from the very first line, "[...] propone l'abbandono della nozione confessionale di rivelazione "divina," in cui il celebre monumento letterario è andato storicamente a dissolversi."⁵⁸ Thus, Villa is concerned solely with its language, and not the religious implications that have come to dominate the Old Testament across the ages. Many scholars allow their biases to influence their translations and subsequent

⁵⁷ G.P. Renello, "Il labirinto della Sibilla," in *Segnare un secolo* etc., p. 173.

⁵⁸ E. Villa, "Introduzione a *Genesi*," in *il Verri*, n.7-8, novembre 1998, p. 12.

commentaries of this text, yet by viewing it as a piece of literature, and not “the word of god,” we find that Villa’s version is unlike any in existence for it does not force beyond the boundaries of what its language permits. The excerpt from Villa’s biblical translation included in *il Verri* is only in partial form. After comparing it with the original manuscript, I found it strange that the editor opted to leave out the title of the passage, which right away attests to the singularity of Villa’s translation in respect to others: what is typically rendered as the “Fall of man,” has been translated by Villa as “L’Impresa del Rettile” [The Reptile’s Endeavor]. Not only does this title help explain many of the philological notes Villa places alongside the text, but also demonstrates his choice to highlight the serpent as the subject of the passage instead of man.

Following Villa’s introduction and translation of *Genesis* are six poems: the long piece in Italian – with a Latin refrain – entitled *Imprimatur*, four short works comprising the collection *Vanità verbale*, also in Italian, and a *Sibylla* in Latin. While Villa had published the former in 1958 in a rare edition that included watercolors by the artist Nuvolo, it was not reproduced in Tagliaferri’s *Opere poetiche*; the original edition also includes a poem in Italian and French, as well as another in Latin and French, both of which have been reproduced and partially translated for the present volume. The latter collection was never published and comes from Villa’s papers held at the Panizzi library. These four short poems are a sort of etymological exploration in verse regarding the four seasons. For the sake of space, they have not been translated for this volume.

In general, the essays are rather short (about 5 to 6 pages each) and, for the most part, their analyses of the poet’s work remain on the surface. Tagliaferri’s contributions serve to introduce the selections offered in the journal, save *Vanità verbale*, which is instead tackled by Ugo Fracassa. Nanni Cagnone’s “Emilio, al contrario” is more a personal memoir than a critical exegesis. Jacqueline Risset’s “Come un negro di Dakkar” investigates Villa’s French but fails to

tease out the textual examples she cites. In her “*Renovatum Mundiloquium*: sul latino di Emilio Villa,” Cecilia Bello once again performs a serious analysis of Villa’s Latin but still clings to the idea that it is superior to his Italian:

[...] il mistilinguismo villiano risponde anche a una vocazione poetica che intende mettere alla prova il linguaggio, nella sua essenza e nelle sue potenzialità; e alla stessa vocazione sembrano rispondere anche il ricorso a lingue classiche (greco antico, latino) e preclassiche (accadico e sumerico), la sua netta tendenza a creare neologismi o usare *hapax legomena*, il furore ibridatorio con cui devia radici e declinazioni di nomi latini e ortografia francese e portoghese.⁵⁹

In addition, isn’t the purpose of all poetry to put language to the test, no matter if it’s a single language or a mixture of languages? The results of Villa’s “recourse” to ancient languages are also found in his Italian works, where neologisms, Latinisms, Grecisms (and maybe even Akkadicisms and Sumerianisms) run amok. All of which creates a sort of hybridity within the Italian poems themselves. In fact, the sketch Lello Voce draws of Villa’s poetic language is much more faithful to reality: “[...] all’interno della ricerca di Villa, [...] pare proprio che già una sola lingua sia abitata da tante differenti lingue.”⁶⁰

Andrea Cortellessa’s “Una nuova scienza dell’occhio rovesciato: Emilio Villa scrive l’arte” investigates Villa’s activity as an art critic, stopping along the way to show affinities between his work and that of other artists (such as the film director Stanley Kubrick or the Italian poet Dino Campana), and does so without clearly providing any evidence in Villa’s work. In other words, in order to follow Cortellessa’s essay one must first be an expert on Villa and the art world at large. Milli Graffi’s contribution seems even more haphazard as it opens without any sort of thesis statement to tie her essay together. Its three pages consist of more examples than

⁵⁹ C. Bello Minciocchi “*Renovatum Mundiloquium*: sul latino di Emilio Villa,” in *Il Verri*, etc., p. 75.

⁶⁰ L. Voce, “Il transito provocato delle idee antiche. Appunti sulla poesia di Emilio Villa” (2006). Available online at: liberinversi.altervista.org/tag/emilio-villa/

actual criticism, which, when it does come, is relayed through abstract theory that the author fails to substantiate by explaining what they have to do with the examples she provides. Toward the end of the volume this critical aimlessness suddenly shifts in the other direction entirely, toward overly rigid specificity, with Ferdinando Goglia's "Esplorando *le mûra di t;éb;é*." While the critic's comparison of this late collection with that of earlier ones, such as *Adolescenza* and *Ormai*, help to establish a continuity among all of Villa's work, it is weighed down by rather specific lists of words to which the author assigns "positive" and "negative" symbols:

crepuscolo –
 ombra –
 annega –
 inquietudine –
 oscura –
 buono +
 favorevole +⁶¹

Without any analysis of these words in the larger context of the poet's works to prove the validity of their connotations, the author's contribution is little more than a list.

After Tagliaferri's introductions to the primary texts and Bello-Minciacchi's essay on Villa's Latin, the only thing left in this monographic issue is Andrea Zanzotto's "Come sta Villa." Despite being the shortest of all the essays (two pages) it is packed with a number of useful observations. We will cite and analyze Zanzotto's essay at length in our section concerning Villa within the landscape of the 20th century. However, in continuing the discussion on Villa's treatment of languages that has run a thread through this section, I would like to cite Zanzotto: "... attraverso le lingue [Villa] saggia l'irrilevanza delle lingue e va al di là della poesia..."⁶² Therefore, rather than making claims that one language in Villa's work holds prevalence over another, maybe it would be better to follow Zanzotto's statement that one is just

⁶¹ F. Goglia, "Esplorando *le mûra di t;éb;é*," in "il Verri," etc., p. 125.

⁶² A. Zanzotto, "Come sta Villa?" in *il Verri*, n.7-8, etc., p. 61.

as “irrelevant” as the next; another victim to be sacrificed in the renovation of language altogether.

Uomini e idee: Edited by Luciano Caruso and Stelio Maria Martini, this monographic issue dedicated to the work of Emilio Villa precedes that of *il Verri* by twenty-three years.⁶³ More than traditional critical essays, the contributions contained here are homages to Villa by the many poets and visual artists he influenced over the years. Including prominent names like Alberto Burri, Mario Diacono, Claudio Parmiggiani, William Xerra, Enrico Bugli, Gianfranco Baruchello, Giovanna Sandri, Giulia Niccolai, Adriano Spatola, these pieces demonstrate just how far-reaching Villa’s influence was. The volume also proves important for the many previously unpublished works it collects, which, to the best of my knowledge, have not been reprinted in any other venues to date. For example, the selections of Villa’s visual art are much more expansive, and consequently much more useful to future critics, than those dotting the pages of Tagliaferri’s later *Opere e documenti*.

Regarding the selections of verse, we should say that this volume, more than any before or after it, paints the most faithful picture of Villa’s work from the late 60s, for the many previously unpublished pieces demonstrate that Villa did not abandon the Italian language, but rather continued to write in it while simultaneously experimenting in French. These unpublished poems are: *Sommeil-la vigna* (in Italian and French, 1968); *Raconter un appareil* (in French, 1967); *Anthropodaimones* (in French, 1967); *La me ga scritto III* (in Italian with a Venetian title, 1967); and the long poem *Pour violer sa main* (in French, 1968).

⁶³ Any mention of this volume has been buried in the many bibliographies edited by Aldo Tagliaferri. Luciano Caruso authored a rather polemic review of Tagliaferri’s exhibition of Villa’s visual art, which caused not only his collaborations with Villa, but also the holdings of Villa material in his archive in Florence, to be shunned from these editions, as well as later exhibitions curated by Tagliaferri, such as that held in Reggio Emilia in 2008.

The selections from Villa's published works included in the anthological part of this volume demonstrate the editors' close eye for detail. For example, the title of the long poem in Italian *Comizio 1953* is preceded by a "da," implying that what appears on the page is merely a selection from that poem and that there exists a longer version. It seems we are splitting hairs, but the fact that the "da" is missing from Tagliaferri's later anthological choices can mislead readers. In fact, it was only until I found a copy of *Uomini e idee*, after years of searching, that I was finally put on the path to track down the full version of *Comizio*. While we are on the topic, we must call attention to another text included in this volume that Tagliaferri later deemed unattributable to Villa's hand.⁶⁴ The wonderfully titled *All'Upim è già Natale* constitutes a collaboration between Caruso and Villa in which the duo wrote verse in different languages between the lines of a visual work, entitled *Racconto Agrà*, previously created by Silvio Craia and Giorgio Cegna. While Tagliaferri maintains that this work is simply a re-titling of *Racconto Agrà*,⁶⁵ a close examination of the original manuscript of *Upim* in Caruso's archives proves this is not the case. Although I will publish a complete essay on this matter elsewhere,⁶⁶ I would like to state here that the manuscript not only unmistakably shows Villa's handwriting but his verses also contain themes similar to those of his other poems. Furthermore, the process at large is typical of Villa: this work holding many affinities with the aforementioned *Geometria reformata*, where Villa also wrote verse between the visual works of Claudio Parmiggiani.

⁶⁴ See the bibliography on page 429 in *Emilio Villa. Poeta e scrittore*, etc.

⁶⁵ Tagliaferri's opinion that Caruso and Villa renamed the original and published it under their own is rather absurd. Why would two artists, both of whom were renowned for appropriating and expanding upon the work of others, simply copy?

⁶⁶ The Italian literary journal "Risvolti" is planning a monographic issue on the work of Luciano Caruso, to which I have been invited to contribute an essay on his collaborations with Villa.

Most of the critical essays included in *Uomini e idee* are too abstract and unsubstantiated by serious textual analysis to be useful here. However, there are two in particular worth mentioning: “Quelques remarques sur la langue villaine” by Francis Darbousset and Ivos Margoni and “Cosmogonia ‘pubblica’ e ‘privata’ in Emilio Villa” by Adriano Spatola. Unlike Jacqueline Risset’s “Come un negro di Dakkar” in *il Verri*, this investigation into Villa’s French compares his macaronic version of the language to a standard French. These critics should be praised for they begin with many textual examples of Villa’s linguistic transgressions of both French phonemes and morphemes, while a standard French is employed to highlight the process behind these transgressions, such as “**Eau give étran je** (ogive étrange)” or “**propheetus** (fait apparaître **foetus** dans **prohète**.”⁶⁷ And we should add that the critics’ analyses stop here (just shy of assigning any meaning to the signifiers they use as examples, a process that, just like Villa himself, these critics leave to the reader) and that they also heavily employ the question mark throughout their essay, noting any instance when their analysis is merely a suggestion, and no way definitive, regarding how Villa shapes poetic language.

Similar to the essay penned by Andrea Zanzotto in *il Verri*, Adriano Spatola’s contribution to *Uomini e idee* also serves as an example of an experimental poet reading the work of another and is equally rich with insight. For example, in the span of a few sentences, he lists the principle techniques Villa employs in order to disrupt a text:

Queste interruzioni sono di vario tipo: parentetiche, semantiche, visuali, o semplicemente ottenute con la sostituzione di una lingua a un’altra, senza limiti all’estensione del campo delle lingue utilizzabili. Definirle tecniche di assenza è forse azzardato, ma bisogna rendersi conto del fatto che il lettore interpreta involontariamente queste interruzioni come “pause” nel massiccio bombardamento di neologismi, iperlogismi, exlogismi,

⁶⁷ F. Darbousset and I. Margoni, “Quelques remarques sur la langue villaine,” in *Uomini e idee*, Anno XVIII, n. 2/4, Ottobre 1975, p. 25.

(perché anche il termine desueto non appare soltanto *culto* ma prospetta valenze magiche o almeno ritualistiche) inglogismi ecc.⁶⁸

This list, more useful than any essay on Villa filled with trite theory, proves an invaluable starting point for anyone wishing to explore his poetry.

Although Spatola's essay will also be dealt with at length in the following section of this study, I would like to conclude this one by citing one of his statements concerning the "improper" methodological approaches critics adopt when it comes to Villa:

Con questo metodo non si fa altro, mi pare, che continuare a chiudere cerchi che dovrebbero essere lasciati aperti per il lettore "ingenuo", se di lettore ingenuo si può parlare per una poesia come quella di Villa, perché a conti fatti "la nuova gente di oggi" può ben leggere questa [...] poesia senza aiuto, o almeno senza l'aiuto di questa concezione dualistica, o peggio, manicheistica, dalla quale non riesco a staccarmi, come critico e come poeta, e che devo ammettere [...] legittima.⁶⁹

Therefore, like Villa himself, the critic must also learn not to close these circles. The best way to do this is to concentrate on the linguistic process that allows for the creation of new meaning, not the meaning itself. It is critics like Cecilia Bello-Minciacchi, Francis Darbousset and Ivos Margoni, as well as poets like Andrea Zanzotto and Adriano Spatola who have chosen to adopt this methodology in their pursuit of Villa. These linguistic analyses allow one to enjoy the process and not the outcome, and can be applied to anything Villa did, no matter the sphere of activity or the language employed. Like Melville's novel, this is open-ended approach will also be adopted here, for it is the only one allowing for the pursuit of the White Whale to continue another day.

⁶⁸ A. Spatola, "Cosmogonia pubblica e privata," in *Uomini e Idee*, etc., pp. 56-57.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Section Two: Emilio Villa in the Landscape of 20th Century Poetry

Looking back it seems all the dust kicked up by experimental poetry has finally settled, allowing us to better survey a landscape that was just as chaotic as it was prolific, and to reflect on a literary canon different from that which had previously come to shape the 20th century. One of the critical tools that helps us to probe this situation is undoubtedly the replacement of the rather general term of “experimentalism” with that of “research poetry,” which, in its specificity, promotes an expression based on the elaboration, investigation, or verification of the possibilities and qualities of language.⁷⁰

Seen under this new light, the poetic landscape appears much different than its conventional representations: those poets who have been cast as protagonists of the 20th century may become marginal figures, whereas lesser-known poets may become giants. In the case of Emilio Villa, it is not only a matter of discovering a talent that was lost, marginalized, or even ignored over the years, but also of acknowledging a presence so powerful that, when inserted into that landscape, disrupts all its coordinates.

We will draw upon Andrea Zanzotto’s statements found in his contribution to *il Verri*:

C’è una sua assenza ancora più “reale”, nella forma di una sottrazione rispetto a qualsiasi inquadramento temporale, all’interno di una successione storica o autobiografica lineare. Fin dall’inizio infatti egli “precorre” talmente da apparirci, anche oggi, con gli scritti o grafemi di allora, al di là dell’odierno e del futuribile, sospeso inoltre fra sovransenso polimorfo ma forse anche ultimativo, e puro non senso. Villa conserva tutta la sua inavvicinabilità, che è assai pericolosa, in certo qual modo, perché in grado di “aver già doppiato” tutti, tutte le esperienze-esperimenti, e nello stesso tempo conserva il massimo di un vulcanico furor, capace di mettere in campo mezzi espressivi, soprattutto linguistici,

⁷⁰ The Italian critic Francesco Muzzioli originally coined the term “research poetry” in his anthology *La poesia di ricerca in Italia* (Rome: Cirps, 2001). In compiling their anthology of 20th century Italian poetry, Luigi Ballerini and Beppe Cavatorta adopted Muzzioli’s term as a guiding principle for their selections. A discussion of the implications of using such a term to describe the poetry of the Novecento can be found in their introduction to the first tome of *Those who from afar look like flies* (forthcoming with University of Toronto Press).

eccezionali, e pur anche una forma di “noncuranza” per il destinatario. Si propone cioè fin dall’inizio in un “di là” non cronologicamente collocabile [...].⁷¹

In elaborating on the many points Zanzotto’s raises in these few lines, we will start with the fact that Villa does not fit into the chronological parameters typically used to define the 20th century literary canon: many of the innovations found in his work preceded, in some cases by decades, those of either individual poets or entire groups. In the 30s and 40s, as the Hermetics composed solipsistic verses, Villa was working on eliminating the authorial presence from his poetry, in order to free its language of biographical obstructions. In the 50s, while Pasolini started the polemic regarding the term “experimentalism,” Villa’s *Oramai* and *E ma dopo* already displayed the techniques of a sophisticated “research poetry.” In these same collections Villa was using dialects to achieve much more complex aesthetic results than those attempted by Pasolini in his *La meglio gioventù*, in 1954, composed in his native Friulano. Many of the stylistic innovations adopted by the Novissimi in the 60s can already be found in the compositions written by Villa in the 50s, see *Comizio 1953*, *Imprimatur*, or *17 variazioni* (discussed below).

Villa does not fit in any of the poetic categories usually employed to describe the Novecento, and this in part explains the “absence” Zanzotto mentions. However, we must also consider the fact that in a century characterized by so many “-isms” and artistic currents, groups and factions, Villa always remained fiercely independent, always refusing to join in. Consequently, he was ostracized by the representatives of mainstream culture and his own disgruntled peers.

Villa’s work as a poet stems from his erudition as a scholar and translator of ancient languages; his aim was to create a mythical or ancient present through the language of poetry. And this is what Zanzotto meant by stating that Villa’s inapproachability was due to the fact that

⁷¹ A. Zanzotto, “Come sta Villa?”, in *il Verri*, etc., pp. 59-60.

he was capable of employing ‘exceptional’ linguistic techniques in his verse: similar to an etymologist’s study of an ancient text, Villa’s poetry relies on a mélange of different languages; he removed himself from his work to mirror how the author of an ancient text is unknown to modern readers, leaving them to deal solely with its language; the often indecipherable syntax of these ancient texts, including their many lacunae, is often replicated to allow for different reconstructions of his poetry and subsequently different interpretations; and even single words – either in the form of neologisms, portmanteau words, modern words re-written according to Greek or Latin phonetics, or words in Sumerian or Akkadian – are used to evoke a sense of encountering language at its mysterious origins.

These characteristics make Villa’s style one of the best examples of that “research poetry” we mentioned earlier. In trying to place his work within the galaxy of research poetry, we can not remain within the confines of Italy, but instead must branch out to include the poetic scenes of Brazil and the United States. The best place to start is with T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, the two giants of modernism who have influenced poets throughout the western hemisphere and in Italy in particular.

Both Eliot and Pound turned to “other” traditions in the 20th Century. More specifically, they used early Italian literature, mainly the verse of Dante and Cavalcanti, to help resuscitate the language of poetry in their present. However, we must right away make a crucial distinction between their two poetics: while one reanimates the past in the present, the other reanimates the present through the past. For example, T.S. Eliot absorbs citations from the *Divine Comedy* to create a collage in which the content of Dante’s work takes on new meaning within a modern context:

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,

I had not thought death had undone so many.⁷²

In translating Dante's lines from the third canto of *Inferno* ("si lunga tratta di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto / che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta"), Eliot assigns new meaning to the language he received by tradition; i.e. that characteristics of the *Inferno* have come to define the modern landscape of London. This operation also creates a sort of reciprocity between the traditional and contemporary works, one expanding upon the meaning of the other, in a way that readers of Eliot may now view Dante's own passage of the *Inferno* through a new lens.

Pound, on the other hand, much like Villa in his own right, besides being an avid reader of this early Italian tradition, was also its translator. In scrutinizing every word of these texts, Pound gained an intimate knowledge of the formal techniques they employed; in fact, his rendering of Cavalcanti's verse are phenomenal not so much for the meaning that comes across in Pound's English, but more so for his ability to bend English syntax and morphology to mirror Cavalcanti's innovations in these areas. Pound also knew that Cavalcanti's verse relied upon a constructed ambiguity in order to constantly produce meaning⁷³, and thus focused more on the tools offered by the target language, sometimes even at the risk of sacrificing the referent. And here, we return once again to our distinction between the poets who are interested in the meaning (signification) and those who are interested more in the process behind the creation of that meaning (the construction of the signifier). While Eliot cites and re-contextualizes to expand

⁷² T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *The Waste Land and Other Poems*, edited with an introduction by Frank Kermode, New York: Penguin, 2003, p. 57.

⁷³ For Pound's many statements regarding how Cavalcanti can be considered the master of an experimental style of poetry see his essay *Cavalcanti* included in *Pound's Cavalcanti*, edited by David Anderson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). Speaking of *Donna mi prega*, in fact, he states that "The 'non razionale ma che si sente' is for the experiment, it is against the tyranny of the syllogism, blinding and obscurantist" (p.203). That is to say that Cavalcanti's complex syntax is a deliberate stylistic tool intended to break the tyranny of the syllogism. While the syllogism closes the door on a particular discourse, a constructed ambiguity leaves it open, allowing for discourse to continue indefinitely.

upon a pre-established signification, Pound deploys the formal techniques themselves to help renovate the signifier.

Therefore as both a translator of earlier traditions and a poet who draws upon their techniques to resuscitate modern language, we can say that Pound, much more than Eliot, can be seen as at least a partial forerunner of Villa. We find further evidence of this in Pound's preface to his *Spirit of Romance*: "I am interested in poetry. I have attempted to examine certain forces, elements or qualities which were potent in the medieval literature of the Latin tongues, and are, as I believe, still potent in our own."⁷⁴ The forces Pound examines, as we have said, are those linguistic forces that still serve as potent means to revamping modern tongues. Furthermore, our argument is strengthened as we follow Pound through his preface:

It is dawn in Jerusalem while midnight hovers above the Pillars of Hercules. All ages are contemporaneous. It is B.C., let us say, in Morocco. The Middle Ages are in Russia. The future stirs already in the minds of the few. This is especially true of literature, where real time is independent of the apparent, and where many dead men are our grandchildren's contemporaries, while many of our contemporaries have been already gathered into Abraham's bosom, or some more fitting receptacle.⁷⁵

In looking for formal techniques on which to capitalize in his own poetry, Pound does not make any chronological or geographical distinctions. More importantly, he also mixes the mythical with the modern. Pound, as well as Villa, composed his verses by combining elements that hail from distant time periods.

Moving away from the early Romance literature of Europe, Pound's interests would eventually lead him to the ancient Chinese ideogram. The inspiration to explore this new terrain came from Ernest Fenollosa's essay *On the Chinese Written Character*, which he felt could serve as important tools to be adopted by western poetry.

⁷⁴ E. Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1910, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The more concretely and vividly we express the interactions of things the better the poetry. We need in poetry thousands of active words, each doing its utmost to show forth the motive and vital forces. We can not exhibit the wealth of nature by mere summation, by piling on sentences. Poetic thought works by suggestion, crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within. In Chinese character each work accumulated this sort of energy.⁷⁶

Looking to capitalize on the poetic “energy” contained in the Chinese ideogram, Pound included many of them in his *Cantos*, adding to his verse another level of potential meaning that western forms of writing are unable to reach. And Villa, in translating the Hebrew Bible, often encountered a similar “poetic energy” in the pictograms of early Mediterranean cultures. In fact, the notes found in the penultimate draft of his translation include these ancient pictograms, demonstrating that Villa had uncovered another etymological layer in his linguistic excavation, one that moves backwards from modern languages, through Latin Greek, Hebrew, Sumerian, Akkadian, to reach these pictograms. It is as if these earliest forms of writing preserve a wealth of meaning completely lost to the now more standard forms of writing. Although pictograms do not appear in Villa’s poetry with the same frequency as ideograms do in Pound’s *Cantos*, their deployment as forms to renovate the languages of his later texts is contemporaneous to this penultimate draft of the Pentateuch translation.

Before shifting our attention to the Italian 20th Century, we should open a brief parenthesis to highlight the affinities between Villa and another poet writing in English: Lewis Carroll. Although he was not a 20th century poet, his influence was widely felt across it. Some Italian critics have hinted indirectly at commonalities between Villa and Carroll, but have never made the connection outwardly explicit. Take Tagliaferri for example: “Gli strumenti di Villa [...] sono la metafora inconciliabile, il pun, l’allitterazione, il paradosso, il witz, la deformazione

⁷⁶ E. Fenollosa, *On Chinese Written Character*, in E. Pound, *Instigations*, New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920, p. 210. It is worth noting that this edition also contains an essay by Fenollosa on *Genesis* that, in its exegesis, holds certain affinities with that of Villa.

Within the Italian landscape, Giovanni Pascoli may also be viewed as a partial forerunner of Emilio Villa, particularly with concern to the role of the *vox*; a term used to describe a word that resides in the interstitial space between sound and signification. Gianfranco Contini was the first to highlight the *vox* in Pascoli's verse in his *Il linguaggio di Pascoli*⁸⁰, but the philosopher Giorgio Agamben would later expand on Contini's findings in his *Pascoli e il pensiero della voce*.⁸¹ Our study will rely mostly on Agamben's later additions to the topic for his essay deals solely with the *vox*, which will not only help us to more profoundly grasp its function, but also to better apply it to the work of Villa.

Agamben opens his essay with a very evocative quote from Pascoli's *Pensieri scolastici*, one that immediately brings Villa to mind: "[...] la lingua dei poeti è sempre una lingua morta [...] curioso da dirsi: lingua morta che si usa a dar maggior vita al pensiero."⁸² Here the expression "dead language" is not used in reference to languages that are no longer spoken, as in Latin and ancient Greek are *dead* languages. It might be better to define the poetic operation we are about to discuss as *the creation of a language that has yet to exist*; dead in the sense of inexistence, not that it was living and has ceased to be.

Let us return to Agamben: "Il pensiero vive della morte delle parole. Pensare, poetare significherebbero, in questa prospettiva, far esperienza della morte della parola, proferire le morte parole."⁸³ The transition is subtle, so we should note that Agamben hones Pascoli's rather general statement regarding dead *language* down to dead *words*. Therefore, we are dealing with

⁸⁰ G. Contini, "Il linguaggio di Pascoli," in G. Pascoli, *Poesie*, Milano: Mondadori, 1969.

⁸¹ G. Agamben, "Pascoli e il pensiero della voce," in *Categorie italiane*, Venezia: Marsilio, 1996.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.68.

the individual phonemes and morphemes that comprise a language system and not language as a whole. However, as the poet “creates an experience” out of these dead words, they in turn shape language rendering it unknown or foreign. In other words, we can call this poetic process the estrangement of the typically communicative function of language, in that it suddenly renders something previously comprehensible, incomprehensible or introduces something entirely new, which is equally incomprehensible.

In order to understand this “incomprehension,” let us pull from another of Agamben’s examples:

Supponiamo che qualcuno oda un segno sconosciuto, il suono di una parola di cui ignora il significato, per esempio la parola “temetum”. Certamente, ignorando che cosa essa voglia dire, desidererà saperlo. Ma, per questo, è necessario che egli sappia che il suono che ha udito non è una vuota voce, il mero suono te-me-tum, ma un suono significante. Altrimenti quel senso trisillabico sarebbe già conosciuto pienamente nel momento in cui è percepito all’udito.⁸⁴

In fact, the sign *temetum* was unknown to the author of this study and therefore presented itself as mere sound without signification. Knowing that this was not an “empty voice” but rather a sound with the intent to signify, I was prompted by the desire to discover its meaning and looked it up: *temetum* is Latin for an intoxicating drink. However, since the meaning of *temetum* was not immediately known to me, between hearing it and discovering its meaning, I experienced a moment of “linguistic insecurity,” in which the sound of a word was without meaning but nevertheless begged to be explored.

Therefore, a word that evokes this momentary sense of insecurity, incomprehension, or even instability can be defined, according to Agamben, as a *vox*, for it lies on the cusp between sound and signification: “non è mero suono, ma non è ancora significato.”⁸⁵ To recapitulate what

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

we have discussed thus far, the *vox* may either come in the form of a completely new word, an original invention introduced by the poet, or as a word stripped of its conventional meaning down to its purely phonetic value. In either case, the *vox* does not serve as a bridge between signifier and signified, but rather opens a gap. And this gap reveals that sense of “insecurity.” The effect is that we come into contact with the very origins of language, any language, with that moment in which sounds are uttered for the first time with the intention to signify.

After defining the *vox*, Agamben further substantiates his analysis by citing the eleventh century French philosopher and monk Guaniolo:

[...la voce] non come viene pensato da chi conosce che cosa si è soliti significare con quella voce, ma, piuttosto, come viene pensato da chi non ne conosce il significato e pensa solo secondo il movimento dell'animo nell'udire quella voce e cerca di rappresentarsi il significato della voce percepita.⁸⁶

Although Guaniolo's observations were intended for a religious context, they help us to better define the *vox*. Bouncing our earlier statements regarding *temetum* against those of Guaniolo, we find that every word, even if well defined or codified within a linguistic system, is susceptible to the randomness of meaning. For example, if my curiosity did not lead me to seek out what *temetum* meant in Latin, I could have just as easily assigned my own meaning to its sound. In other words, the fact that one does not know the meaning of a word may allow him or her to participate in the casual application of signification to its signifier (one based a linguistic hunch or feeling).

At this point Agamben begins to form a cursory list of linguistic mechanisms that help Pascoli to harness this moment between sound and signification. “Glossolalia e xenoglossia sono la cifra della morte della lingua: esse rappresentano l'uscita del linguaggio dalla sua dimensione

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70. The quote comes from Guaniolo's criticism of St. Anselm.

semantica e il suo ritorno nella sfera originale del puro voler-dire.”⁸⁷ While Agamben’s definition of glossolalia (“parola estranea alla lingua d’uso, termine oscuro, di cui non si intende il significato”) too closely resembles his same definition of *vox*, in that both imply sound without codified meaning, we will use glossolalia to mean a collection of individual *voces* that come together to render a language foreign to its reader (a fitting example of which would be the previously cited passage from Carroll’s *Jaberwocky*), even if he or she is a native speaker of it. “Xenoglossia,” on the other hand, implies the proliferation of foreign terms within the native tongue used by the poet to compose his verse.

A textual comparison between Pascoli and Villa’s glossolalic renderings of the Italian language will be dealt with at length in the third section of this study. However, here we will briefly touch on the “xenoglossia” aspect by looking at the occurrences of English in the two poets’ Italian. Agamben cites two examples of Pascoli’s *xenoglosse* sprinkled among the words of his native tongue: “Italy” and “hammerless gun.” While the former does little to seem mysterious to the reader, and consequently evokes little linguistic insecurity (for it too closely resembles “Italia”), the latter better represents this linguistic phenomenon. An Italian speaker may not know that “hammer” has a double meaning in English, as in a hammer used to drive in nails or a hammer caulked on a gun to fire bullets. A hammerless gun to a native speaker of English is somewhat poetic (doesn’t every gun come with a hammer?), but is also immediately understood. An Italian with a faint knowledge of English may mix up the different translations

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 71. Although elsewhere in his essay Agamben brings in other terms, such as onomatopoeia and phono-symbolism as phonetic elements that “indicate an intention to signify,” they are rather general terms that are casually adopted by any number of poets. Therefore, the mechanisms of “glossolalia” and “xenoglossia” are better suited to show the similarities between Pascoli and Villa as “research poets.”

(*precussore* or *martello*) behind the sound of “hammer” and therefore may create a different set of meanings for “hammerless gun.”

The employment of this technique is much more pronounced in Villa’s work, especially in his “macaronic” ones, in which *xenoglosse* suddenly raise the mystery of a number of different foreign terms and whose interpretations vary depending on the reader’s native tongue and his or her command of these foreign languages. But Villa also takes this operation one step further in that he creates “glossolalia” in other languages not his own. In other words, these are not cases of “xenoglossia,” but rather of creations of new *voces* in a foreign language. For example, while the meaning of Pascoli’s “hammerless gun” is quickly recognized by the English speaker, Villa creates an English that is entirely foreign to the native speaker. Take, for example, his English poem *the cuban gong* in which we read a series of gerunds: “purling, hurling, burling, murling.”⁸⁸ While the first two are common terms of the English vocabulary, the last two are Villa’s invention. Therefore, they are actual terms of pure sound with the intent to signify, forcing even native speakers of English into that moment of linguistic insecurity and compelling them to tease out a possible meaning for these creations.

Returning to Villa’s native Italian, we will cite Agamben once more:

[...] la volontà e la coscienza di operare in una lingua morta, cioè individuale e artificiosamente costruita, glossolalica nel senso che si è visto, con o senza “preghiera di interpretazione”. Tale è il difficile, enigmatico rapporto di questo popolo [di poeti] con la sua madre lingua: che solo può ritrovarsi in essa se riesce a sentirla morta, che solo discerpendola in reperti e brani anatomici può amarla e farla sua.⁸⁹

Villa treated every language in his poetry, modern or ancient, as a “dead language”; that is as a language that has yet to exist, a language at its origins, appearing as a collection of sounds with an intention to signify. Since every language is based on the precarious relationship between

⁸⁸ E. Villa, *the cuban gong*, in *Heurarium*, Roma: Edizioni Ex, 1961.

⁸⁹ G. Agamben, “Pascoli e il pensiero della voce,” in *Categorie italiane*, etc. p. 77.

sound and meaning, Villa sees all the rules that govern that relationship as arbitrary, as choices randomly made by individuals over time and who by no means held the final say. And, as we will soon discuss, Villa's native tongue of Italian was not spared such treatment.

When Villa made his poetic debut in 1934 with the collection *Adolescenza*, the influence of Futurism⁹⁰ was waning and that of Hermeticism was on the rise. This first collection has been neglected partly because even the most exemplary critics writing on Villa, such as Stefano Colangelo, maintain that it is impossible to find: “[...] la produzione poetica, sin dagli inizi, è affidata a pubblicazioni occasionali di scarsa tiratura, come la precoce *Adolescenza*, oggi introvabile.”⁹¹ In reality, this entire first collection may be found (and photocopied), along with most of his other collections, in major libraries throughout Italy.

If this is the case, then, there must be other reasons why Villa's first effort, *Adolescenza*, has been cast into obscurity. It seems, as we have already indicated, that critics have often disregarded this collection for, in their opinion, it does not exhibit the “experimental” tendencies that would characterize Villa's later work: for the most part, the form is traditional; the content largely resembles that of the “Hermetics”; and, like the subsequent collections of *Oramai* and *E ma dopo* it was written mostly in standard Italian. Although it is true that this first collection does

⁹⁰ Although Villa's work does serve as a bridge between Futurism and the second Italian avant-garde, the influence of Marinetti and the Futurists at large would not manifest itself until his work from the 50s, and then only on the typographical level, as Villa's syntax would elaborate on the radical innovations of Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tumb*. Later, in the 70s and 80s, Villa would look more to the individual figures of the early European avant-garde at large, such as Duchamp, to merge his writings with visual art. Furthermore, on the surface it would seem that Villa's poetics have much to do with Futurism, but in reality the movement's obsession with the primordial was limited to the representational level. In it, they saw a sort of *tabula rasa*, a moment in which the entirely new could be created and did not necessarily adopt ancient literary forms in order to make the new possible.

⁹¹ S. Colangelo, “Emilio Villa,” in *Poesia del Novecento italiano*, a cura di Niva Lorenzini, Roma: Carocci, 2002, p.128.

not contain the poetic richness that would flourish in Villa's later texts, it, nevertheless, acts as the deceptive tranquility just before the big bang. Here, the reader does in fact find conventional verse, but Villa also begins to skew the lines between prose and poetry; an operation he would later push to an extreme in his art criticism. In other words, as we will discover, it serves as a launching pad for the collections to come.

The so-called affinities with the "Hermetics," on the other hand, prove more complicated: "Gli esordi di Emilio Villa come poeta, saggista e critico letterario si svolgono *tutti all'interno delle temperie ermetica, neopetrarchesca e cattolica* che negli anni Trenta era in auge sia a Milano che a Firenze."⁹² Statements such as this are far too sweeping to be of any help in understanding the issue. First, simply because Villa debuted during the reign of the Hermetics does not mean he had anything in common with them. Second, as easy as it might be to criticize the Hermetics, it would be unfair to cast all the poets associated with the group under the rather vague umbrella of Catholicism. For example, the religious implications found in the works of Piero Bigongiari and Mario Luzi differ greatly: while Bigongiari constructs his own unique form of mysticism, Luzi openly adheres to the practices of formal Catholicism. The fact that Villa, at the time of his poetic debut, frequented seminary school does not indicate that his work was necessarily Catholic, or that religion in general played the same role in his poetry as it may have in that of some of the Hermetics (as we have seen, Villa viewed the Bible as literary text, not a doctrine of faith). Third, what sort of neo-Petrarchism are we talking about exactly?

If it is the typical mono-linguistic, solipsistic, lamenting, doubting (and generally boring) Petrarch portrayed by a stilted school of criticism that still hasn't mustered the courage to stop

⁹² A. De Luca, "Scandagliando l'abisso. Emilio Villa critico d'arte," in *Segnare un secolo. Emilio Villa: la parola, l'immagine*, etc., p. 129.

comparing him to Dante⁹³, then yes, this Petrarch may have been an example for the Hermetics, but certainly not for Villa. If, instead, we are referring to a Petrarch who experimented with language and who, through subtle changes in his semantemes and through masterfully constructed ambiguities, reached a polysemy that rivals that of Dante's, then no: this Petrarch has little to do with the Hermetics and everything to do with Villa. In fact, both Petrarch and Villa engage in similar acts of wordplay, intervening directly upon the materiality of language, by either removing or adding morphemes that comprise a word.

For example, the affinities between the two become glaringly apparent when we examine their treatment of the word "remember." In Petrarch: "... come posson queste *membra* / da lo spirito lor viver lontane? // Ma rispondemi Amor: Non ti *rimembra*..."⁹⁴ And in Villa, in English: "(Ember, Member, Remember, Emb, Embor)..."⁹⁵ Elaborating on Petrarch's parsing of the linguistic units of "remember" to send meaning in two different directions (the mental act of recollection and the physical presence of the body), Villa further calls our attention to the morpheme "ember," splintering meaning yet a third time. And Villa does not stop there, while Petrarch's wordplay is contained to what semioticians refer to as the "first articulation" of a linguistic sign, the division of a word into *meaningful* units (in this case, members of the body and memory), Villa, with "Emb" and "Embor" pushes his play on "remember" into the "second

⁹³ Although there exist a number of essays that have in fact made important distinctions between Dante and Petrarch, many scholars are still under the opinion that Dante is the "stoic" poet writing for the salvation of all humanity and Petrarch is the "fragile" poet concerned only for his legacy. Such comparisons have been applied to subsequent Italian writers: for example, that Ungaretti is Dantean, while Montale is Petrarchean. However, this approach fails to consider the poets' individual merits as experimenters of language.

⁹⁴ F. Petrarca, Canto 15, in *Canzoniere*, a cura di M. Santagata, Milano: Mondadori, 2008.

⁹⁵ E. Villa, *Sub Bregme*, in "Tam Tam. Rivista internazionale di poesia", n. 1, 1972.

articulation” of the sign, into the realm of pure sound where words have yet to accumulate meaning.

As it is well known, Gianfranco Contini’s distinction between multi-lingualism (Dante) and mono-lingualism (Petrarch) has proliferated a reductive view of Petrarch, causing many critics to ignore Petrarch’s many linguistic contributions to the understanding of a poetic level of language. If we read very closely and thoroughly, however, we find that the poet employs a subtle experimental technique that causes the meaning of his words to be constantly reformulated, which in turn extends the interpretative boundaries of both the authorial “I” writing the work and the biography that is couched in it.

In other words, with Petrarch we have one of the first examples of a poet who actually invites language to undermine the position of the authorial “I,” not to solidify or validate it (all of which, makes him a sort of grandfather of modern research poetry). Misconceptions of Petrarch and Catholic generalities aside, if there is anything that united the Hermetics under one poetic banner, it was instead their faith in that poetic “I” and their view of language as a passive tool to express it.

A poetic “I” does lie at the center of Villa’s *Adolescenza*, but the attempt to fashion it in a way that it would harmonize with Hermeticism fails, as it also does in the case of Andrea Zanzotto. Neither the linguistic acrobatics of Villa nor those of Zanzotto (another neo-petrarchan in the linguistic sense⁹⁶), which are from the beginning part and parcel of their poetics, and of no interest to the Hermetics, can be ignored in the assessment of their poetry. In this first collection,

⁹⁶ In their surveys of 20th century Italian poetry, critical authorities like Gianfranco Contini and Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo have erroneously associated the work of Andrea Zanzotto with the category of late-hermeticism and Edoardo Sanguineti excluded him from his anthology *Poesia italiana del Novecento* for this very reason. However, by rooting the subject of his expression in what he called a “flight of signifiers,” Zanzotto exposes the “I” to the same interpretative instabilities as language itself.

Villa begins to question the very concept that the poetic “I.” It is not authorized to say anything at all. In fact, he openly declares his opinion concerning the role of the “I” as early as 1937, in one of his articles for the journal *il Frontespizio*, which was, no less, the literary seat of the Hermetics: “Siamo del parere che la poesia non possa interessarsi ai documenti biografici, alle vicende, interne o esterne, di un uomo, ma accordi il suo dono più sollevante ai risultati di armonia che attraverso alle vicende stesse l’uomo dotato sa raggiungere.”⁹⁷ In brief, in Villa (and even as early as *Adolescenza*), language does not function as a passive vehicle for transmitting the poet’s thoughts to an audience but rather as an active means for inviting the audience to participate in the construction of sense.

The dating (or rather lack there of) of his later texts – such as those collected in *Zodiaco* and *12 Sibyllae* – indicates that at around the time of *Adolescenza* Villa may have already been composing experimental poems in a macaronic Latin.⁹⁸ Also, Villa started writing the texts of his *Oramai* – a collection whose original manuscript bears the subtitle *Pezzi, composizioni, antifone. 1936-1945* – only two years after his first collection. These texts are mostly devoid of a solipsistic quality and, in fact, are strikingly different from anything Hermetic. Additionally, Villa supposedly began writing his long poem *Si, ma lentamente* as early as 1941.⁹⁹ Given all these factors, we must ask ourselves how could the poet turn over a new leaf so quickly, supposedly going from traditionally Hermetic to experimentally avant-garde in so little time? Did his desire to produce these radically different works just fall out of the sky? It seems impossible. Thus, in many respects, *Adolescenza* must be re-examined not only to find what it

⁹⁷ E. Villa, “Sopra il ritorno del canto,” in *il Frontespizio*, n.6, giugno 1937- XV, p. 458.

⁹⁸ See Cecilia Bello Minciocchi’s “Tentazione e temibilità del linguaggio,” in *Zodiaco*, etc.

⁹⁹ The hypothesis is advanced by Antonio Pietropaoli in his “Emilio Villa: un poeta senza poetica,” in *Segnare un secolo*, etc.

may or may not have in common with Villa's contemporary Latin works, but also the seeds it plants for his subsequent collections in Italian. It cannot be overlooked simply because it was not significantly innovative and has erroneously been deemed "Hermetic."

Furthermore, the letters Villa exchanged between 1938 and 1941 with Florentine literary figures such as Carlo Betocchi and Oreste Macrì attest to the fact that he did not feel his poetics harmonized with those of the Hermetics. For example, in a letter to Betocchi from 1938 we find that Villa sent his poems to the editor of *Frontespizio* in hope that he would read them and express his critical opinion. However, Villa also clearly states that he is not soliciting their publication in the journal: "Non ho, veramente, aspirazione a far conoscere le mie poesie sul *Frontespizio*. Anzi, non lo voglio. Anche perché so che solo due o tre cose di questa raccolta, si e no potrebbero andare per il *Frontespizio*, e anche queste come riputate mediocri."¹⁰⁰ From Villa's bibliography we know the poems of *Adolescenza* had already been published four years prior, so the poems mentioned in the letter were most likely drafts of those to be included in *Oramai*. Further examples of Villa distinguishing himself from the Hermetics can be found in his contributions to the journal *Italia che scrive*. See for example his review of Piero Bigongiari's first collection *La figlia di Babilonia*, which was also written as Villa was composing his *Oramai*:

[...] mi sono spesso domandato se le parole dei giovani fiorentini hanno in sé tale forza [...] da reggere con qualche umana disinvoltura il capriccio, lo scompenso, la liberalità di tutta questa specie di soprannaturale naturale e sensuoso; se le loro parole non sono relativamente esagerate ed eccentriche [...].¹⁰¹

And later in the same review:

¹⁰⁰ Transcriptions of the letters in question can be found in *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore*, Milano: Mazzotta, 2008, pp. 325-331.

¹⁰¹ E. Villa, "Piero Bigongiari. *La figlia di Babilonia*," in *Italia che scrive. Rassegna per il mondo che legge*, N. 1-2, 1943- XXI, p.15.

C'è anche, in questo, almeno una parte di un equivoco per me molto doloroso: cioè la tendenza a trasferire una familiare irritazione, una iniziativa profondamente mentale, dentro modi e fogge seducenti poeticamente. Però non è difficile riconoscere (al di fuori di quelli che possano essere i miei personali rapporti con la poesia e il poetico) come per questa via uno possa accrescere, e Bigongiari più di tutti, l'organismo patetico dell'immaginativa.¹⁰²

Thus, on more than one occasion we have it from the poet's own hand that his poetics differ from those of the then dominating trend.

To examine the "affiliation" of this second collection, *Oramai*, with Italian poetic schools, let's look at an observation from Antonio Pietropaoli in his contribution to *Segnare un secolo*:

Questi testi risentono sia della lezione pavesiana anti-ermetica di *Lavorare Stanca* e sia della svolta realistica di alcuni dei maggiori ermetici; e perciò partecipano della nascente poetica neorealista, anche se in una maniera un po' eccentrica e fantasiosa, ovvero del tutto esente da ogni forma d'impegno socio-politico.¹⁰³

According to Pietropaoli, *Oramai* lies on the cusp between a late Hermeticism and a burgeoning Neorealism. And from here he moves to cite the reasons why this collection falls under this other category: its content speaks of the war and the details of everyday life; the lexicon is marked by a lowering in register, as in the use of dialect and regionalisms; and the verses tend to resemble more prose than poetry and, since they strive for realism, tend to lose the characteristics of conventional meter. These criterion, however, seem highly unstable. For example, Giuseppe Ungaretti in his *Porto Sepolto* also spoke of war; does this make him a neorealist? Furthermore, the choice to write in dialect was not entirely specific to Neo-realism and, for Villa in particular, dialect was not employed to be faithful to reality (as was the goal for Neo-realists), but rather to imbue his texts with another layer of linguistic expression (there are certain dialectal idioms that

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.15. It is worthy to note that Villa saw in Bigongiari a potential to move past the intimist style of Hermeticism; a prediction that would actually come to fruition in one of Bigongiari's collections from the Eighties, *Nel delta del poema*.

¹⁰³ A. Pietropaoli, "Emilio Villa: un poeta senza poetica," in *Segnare un secolo.*, etc., p. 110.

do not resonate the same in standard Italian).¹⁰⁴ Finally, a prose syntax is actually quite rare in *Oramai* (in fact, the syntax is wonderfully jumbled) and the unconventional meter does not stem from Villa's desire to be realistic, but rather to establish his own original rhythm.

Fortunately a few pages into the essay the critic breaks momentarily from his original premise: “[...] nei pezzi di *Oramai* si notano alcune stranezze sperimentali che già inquietano il corposo ‘realismo’ di quel decennio.”¹⁰⁵ And from here Pietropaoli goes on to perform some insightful textual analysis, demonstrating how certain words are cut in half in the poem *Però prima del vento* to create an internal rhyme scheme: *gemi-ti / semi / gemi-nate*, or *càno-ni / mano*. This is an astute observation and we can take it one step further: not only does Villa's splitting of words help to parse an unconventional rhyme scheme, but also to call our attention to the etymological similarities of the words themselves (evidencing the influence of his work on ancient texts). For example, the word part *gemi-* acts as a *semi* that grows and branches into other words like *gemiti* and *geminare*, which, among other things, forces the reader to find new meaning by connecting phonetically two rather distant signifiers (i.e. what do *moans* have to do with *geminates*?). And this is an etymological game that Villa plays throughout his entire body of work and across different languages; it's simply in its infancy in *Oramai*.

After investigating a textual sample that is far too narrow to actually flush out the highly experimental underpinnings of *Oramai*, Pietropaoli rushes to fit the poet's third collection, *E ma dopo*, into the “avant-garde” category:

[...] anche nel “gioco al rialzo” dell'avanguardia villiana è in qualche misura possibile orientarsi (che è poi il dovere del critico: storicizzare, chiarire, distinguere). [...] i testi di

¹⁰⁴ And this would also exclude him from being grouped together with the trend of poets writing specifically in dialect, launched by Pasolini, for Villa's use of dialect attest to linguistic concerns, (creating a symbiosis between dialect and standard Italian) and not political ones, which characterized dialectal poets and their opposition to standard Italian.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.111.

E ma dopo possono essere considerati come *la proto-avanguardia* dell'autore, già cominciano a mostrare incoerenza sintattica-semanticamente e lessico fortemente analogico.¹⁰⁶

First, although *E ma dopo* does fall within a “proto-avant-garde” category, an in-depth analysis of *Oramai* shows that it also fits the same bill, for syntactical distortions are highly evident there as well: see *Pezzo 1941* in which subjects jumble with their predicates through syntactical twists and turns. And second, why must these collections necessarily be “proto” avant-garde, when they can just as easily be “post” avant-garde, in the sense that they continue to elaborate on experiments carried out by the first wave of European experimentalism after the turn of the century?

Therefore, to recap thus far, many sustain that *Adolescenza* is Hermetic, *Oramai* is Neo-realist, and *E ma dopo* is proto-Avant-Garde. While these categories make critics feel more at ease in approaching Villa, they also force his work into keeping rather awkward company. Rather than cramming it into these categories, it is Villa's work that requires critics to rethink and redraft the categories themselves (and then maybe all poets will be able to breath a bit easier).

When it comes to Villa, the aforementioned terms “historicize” and “clarify” should be used with caution. Villa detested the word history and always strove to operate outside of it. To try and “clarify” Villa's work the critic must refrain from the temptation to follow any sort of convention, for everything he did was aimed at obliterating convention itself, and this applies not only canonical literary categories, groups and genres, but also to the conventionally codified meaning of language. Thus the work of the critic should respect, adopt, and indulge in the same approach as Villa himself, focusing on the various linguistic mechanisms he employs throughout his poetry and putting interpretation momentarily on the backburner. Finally, I whole-heartedly

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 115. The reader should note that a few lines later the critic still insists that Villa's third collection shows residue of Hermeticism.

agree that distinctions should be made, but it is hard to do so when poetic categories permit only sweeping generalizations; instead comparisons must be made between individual poets (independent of groups).

In the introduction to his short anthology of Villa's poetic works (nothing new here as far as selections go), Giacinto Spagnoletti, unlike other critics, spends a little more time on *Oramai*, but immediately casts it among extremely uncomfortable poetic company: "Il tono costante di *Oramai*, quello più autentico, rientra nel registro elegiaco, tra malinconia e esaltazione panica, da intendersi anche nel senso di paura, smarrimento."¹⁰⁷ When readers of Italian poetry hear the word "elegiac," they cannot help but think of the work of Eugenio Montale – "Pensa: / cangiare in inno l'elegia; rifarsi; / non mancar più."¹⁰⁸ Again, the texts of *Oramai* overwhelmingly prove otherwise. The tone of this collection demonstrates a great deal of levity: we find jovial references to popular songs, episodes of indulging in wine with friends, sexual innuendoes, attempts to *rimorchiare* country girls and bring them back to his *camporella*. All of which could not be any further from Montale's inability to engage life or the gentler sex, or turn a mourning (elegy) into that of joy (hymn). Additionally, as we mentioned before, the linguistic separation between Montale and Villa could not be any more gaping: while the former uses language as a passive vehicle to express this elegy, the latter experiments with language and gives it the freedom to transgress and betray the author's intentions.

However, Spagnoletti does tend to disagree that there is a "realist" quality to *Oramai*:

[...] nessun altro libro di Villa è stato da lui meno "costruito" di questo; nel quale alle sequenze di una poesia in fieri l'autore preferisce una propria scelta, e una collocazione che non tiene alcun conto con la progressione cronologica. [...] Villa non è affatto

¹⁰⁷ G. Spagnoletti, "Introduzione," in *Omaggio a Emilio Villa*, Roma: Fondazione Piazzolla, 1998, p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ E. Montale, "Riviere," in *Ossi di seppia* (1928), in *Tutte le poesie*, a cura di Giorgio Zampa, Milano: Mondadori, 1985.

interessato al “romanzo di guerra”, come altri autori del tempo (basta pensare a Sereni, ma anche a Montale, Ungaretti, Quasimodo, ecc.).¹⁰⁹

Yet Spagnoletti feels that *Oramai* closes a first phase of Villa’s work, and given the title, hints at the “more interesting” phase to come:

C’è in quell’avverbio, a cui si riferisce tutta una situazione che da letterario risale al politico (e sociale), il proposito di chiudere la partita, di ricominciare da capo, seguendo gli anelli di una catena tutta oramai tendente a quella che egli chiama l’*ideologia fonetica*.¹¹⁰

Thus, the critic prefers to proceed by blocks instead of looking at Villa’s work as a project in evolution. He interprets the title of the collection as “By now,” as if Villa was stating that by now this poetic approach is outdated and it is time to move on. Although in making such a statement, it seems that Spagnoletti, in looking at the collection as “elegiac” or in comparing it to other poetic schools, is confusing its content with its form. In other words, from the perspective of content it would indeed appear that Villa was leaving one phase to embark on another: from this point on, biography and the surrounding social-historical situation are in fact no longer present in his verse. Yet, if we interpret *Oramai* from a linguistic standpoint, as a sort of oxymoron, the coexistence of “now” and “never” attests to the fleeting signifying power of poetic language: that it is simultaneously what *is* and what it *never has been*; it is both present and strangely absent. Thus, when seen in this light, *Oramai* serves as a fundamental step along Villa’s poetic development that from here will become increasingly more experimental in its treatment of language.

In fact, with Villa’s third collection, *E ma dopo*, we find that the page often presents blank spaces positioned in strategic places throughout the text, as if they were linguistic traps awaiting the reader. Threads of discourse often vanish within these gaps in signification,

¹⁰⁹ G. Spagnoletti, “Introduzione,” in *Omaggio a Emilio Villa*, etc., p. 13.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.15.

rendering interpretation even more uncertain, similar to how Villa's translations of ancient manuscripts are necessarily riddled with many lacunae. For example, in the poem *Linguistica*, the discourse is interrupted on different occasions, just shy of its logical conclusion, by either periods or these blank spaces:

Non c'è più origini. Né. Né si può sapere se.
Se furono le origini e nemmeno.
 E nemmeno c'è ragione che nascano
 le origini Né più
 la fede, idolo di Amorgos!¹¹¹

It is as if verses gravitated dangerously around blank spaces, disappeared within them, and then finally reemerged anew on the other side. While here the blank spaces and periods serve to regenerate language and send the discourse in various directions, at other times these small abysses devour meaning altogether, in that the discourse does not pick up again on the other side of the blank spaces. In fact, we may say that Villa took Pascoli's technique of stripping language down to its origins to create a gap between sound and signification one step further by applying to the typography of his text. Here, by evidencing the blank spaces on the page, Villa calls attention to the gap between the written word and its meaning, or causes meaning to vanish entirely.

If we use the work of another Italian poet as a counterpoint, Villa's placement of the abysmal space on the page will become clearer. Critics have insisted that in the early poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti the blank space of the page acts to heighten the marvel of the world (*la meraviglia della parola*); like a firecracker against the backdrop of the darkest night, the word stands out on the page and stuns the reader with all of its signifying power. Yet, as the light of the firecracker cuts through the night sky, it also enhances its darkness, or rather as the word juts

¹¹¹ E. Villa, *Linguistica*, in *E ma dopo. Nove componimenti*, con una litografia di Mirko, Roma: Le Edizioni d'Argo, 1950.

from the page the blank spaces around it become more ominous in such stark contrast to it. For example, Bruno Bandini's insightful observations regarding Villa's work as an art critic can also be applied to his poetry:

L'arte, per Villa, è una divinità sempre assente, alla quale possiamo poeticamente attribuire contrassegni, tributare "attributi". L'arte è una presenza del luminoso, del divino, che lascia tracce di sé per folgorazioni, simulacri, confidenze segrete: il critico altro non può che cercare di ricreare la forza e la meraviglia dell'assente, la tensione di quella forza originaria che si è irrimediabilmente celata.¹¹²

Therefore, while Ungaretti is mainly concerned with the amplification of the meaning behind a word, Villa also enhances *the marvel of what's missing*, which lies in the blank spaces, the lacunae, the abysses that call the word's meaning into question.

Shortly after publishing *E ma dopo*, Villa moved to San Paolo, Brazil where he worked for the MASP Museum under the direction of his friend and compatriot Pietro Bardi. During his brief stay in South America, Villa not only composed a number of placards for the museum's primitive art exhibitions, but also contributed a handful of essays to the literary magazine "Habitat." Although most of these essays concern primitive art, there is one in particular in which Villa's philological training leads him to deconstruct the Portuguese language:

Quando dizem que se trata de uma língua derivada do latim (assertiva cientificamente errada), disseram tudo. Ora, o português é uma combinação morfológica de:

léxico latino provincial
léxico latino tardio e medieval
léxico latino eclesiástico
léxico latino da renascença
léxico árabe e persa
léxico francês
léxico franco-provençal
léxico hispano-catalão

Mais:
resíduos bascos

¹¹² B. Bandini, "Informale e dintorni," in *I linguaggi della critica. La critica d'arte in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi.*, Rimini, Fara Editore, 1996, p. 46. Although only 3 pages out of the 200 in this study are dedicated to Villa, they contain an incredibly concise and spot-on description of Villa's art criticism.

resíduos germânicos diversos
resíduos literários italianos
resíduos ingleses
resíduos franceses modernos

Mais:
Todo material neologístico popular

Mais:
as contribuições brasileiras coloniais
as contribuições do léxico indígena
ameríndio.

Mais:
*todas as formações espontâneas populares e da gíria, próprias dos dialetos brasileiros.*¹¹³

In Portuguese Villa sees the perfect *mélange* of languages to be used in the creation of new signification. In fact, he would go on to compose several poems in Portuguese and, upon returning to Italy, would include them in his fourth collection *Heurarium*. An analysis on whether or not the different morphologies Villa lists above actually play a part in Villa's Portuguese lay outside my linguistic capabilities. However, we can say that we have yet another example of how Villa treats all languages the same; he undoubtedly saw the same morphological richness in all the other languages he employs throughout his verse.

Furthermore, while in San Paolo, Villa also came into contact with many of the poets who would go on to form the group *Noigandres*. Although his influence on the likes of Décio Pignatari and Augusto and Heraldo de Campos has yet to be explored, we may venture a few starting points from which such an analysis could begin. For example, given that the *Noigandres* heavily experimented in the visual sphere to create what is now referred to as "concrete poetry," did Villa's typographical creations of *E ma dopo* have any influence on them? If his visual work did not have any direct influence, may be his intimate knowledge of the visual experiments of

¹¹³ E. Villa, *Os puristas são enfadonhos e inúteis*, in "Habitat," n.7, 1952, p. 3.

the European avant-garde help to inform the concrete poetry of South America? Lastly, did Villa's philological deconstruction and subsequent highlighting of the many elements contributing to the morphology of Portuguese serve as inspiration for the *Noigandres*' treatment of their mother tongue?

In closing this section regarding the difficulties of situating Villa's early works of *Adolescenza*, *Oramai*, and *E ma dopo* within the poetic landscape of the 20th century, I would like to cite Tagliaferri:

Da pregiudizi, ben più che da letture critiche, discendono in generale varie proposte di vivisezionare il "corpus" villiano per offrirlo sacrificalmente sugli altari delle ideologie prefabbricate, di segno "avanguardistico" o "tradizionalista"; sicché, tra l'altro, c'è chi giura sul Villa degli anni Quaranta, chi esalta solo quello degli anni Cinquanta o Sessanta, e persino – *sancta simplicitas* – chi vorrebbe fermarsi ad *Adolescenza*.

This statement, which suggests a continuity in Villa's work, was made one year after the publication of Tagliaferri's anthology *Opere poetiche-I*, and already demonstrates a slight change of heart by the critic, for it would appear that his early criticism would land him among "those who exalt a Villa from the Fifties and Sixties."¹¹⁴

Many Villa critics have chosen to ignore his early works like *Adolescenza*, along with the two subsequent collections of *Oramai* and *E ma dopo*, because they were mostly composed in a standard Italian (with scatterings of Milanese dialect). They believe Villa's experiments in other languages – such as French, Portuguese, Ancient Greek, and Latin – carry more weight, claiming that these texts allow for a greater proliferation of meaning, or to either give them a more a

¹¹⁴ A. Tagliaferri, "Occasioni Villiane," in *Baldus*, vo.1, no. 0, 1990, Roma: Antonio Pellicani Editore, p. 32. This is one of Tagliaferri's more measured articles on Villa. He opens his essay calling for "critical readings" but then goes on to compare Villa to James Joyce and Edoardo Sanguineti without offering any textual examples. Having written so much on Villa, contradictions among Tagliaferri's statements are bound to arise, but it goes without saying that anyone responsible for blazing such a difficult trail has the right to rethink the premises with which they started (in fact, it's welcomed).

political tinge under the pretense that his refusal to write in Italian equates to a rebellion against the language imposed either by the Fascism of his youth or that of the neo-capitalist culture of his maturity.

Tagliaferri seems to uphold this notion in the initial pages of his biography on Villa, specifically concerning his experience with Latin in seminary school:

[...] il Latino diventa inesauribile riserva di *eleganze formali*, strutture ritmiche, suggestioni etimologiche e modelli formulaici ai quali Emilio non cesserà di attingere [...] la lingua italiana sembra proprio morta, mentre *una lingua morta* gli permette di mantenere vivo un rapporto con la quotidianità.¹¹⁵

Here we should note that Villa was not concerned whatsoever with the “formal elegances” of Latin. The texts overwhelmingly prove otherwise: Villa employs Latin as if it were a contemporary language used in everyday occurrences and in constant transformation, moving from the high to (extremely) low registers, not merely reflecting the high sounding language of classical literature.

However, Villa also composed and published poems in Italian while attending seminary school in the thirties, and later in the forties and fifties, as well as continued to write in Italian throughout his life, either as the sole language of his verse, as a fundamental component of his macaronic mixtures, as the prose-poetry of his art criticism, or in his translations, when creating a unique poetic palimpsest out of texts by other authors or translating his own work from ancient languages into Italian. If Villa was so committed to this refusal of Italian, then why does it continue to have such a prominent role throughout his oeuvre?

As we have indicated, Villa treats *every language* – whether it be an individual code or one that clashes with other codes – as a *dead language*, contemporary standard Italian included. In addition, it seems the Italian language served as a foundation for the creation of texts in other

¹¹⁵ A. Tagliaferri, *Il clandestino* etc., p.16.

languages. For example, see Ugo Fracassa's significant observation regarding this question in his "Villa in Ytalya": "A pagina 57 di *Zodiaco*, il *Trou* dei primi anni ottanta reca, come a fronte nella pagina, la stesura originaria in italiano, a dimostrazione che il francese era per lui lingua d'arrivo."¹¹⁶ Therefore, in some cases, the composition of texts in other languages may have first passed through Italian, or maybe these other languages served as an extension of Italian, as if they were translations of his Italian, in the sense that, as a go between, translations can expand on the signifying possibilities of both the original and target language (and let's not forget that Villa was a master translator). There is strong evidence to further support such a view, given Villa's English (highly Italianized) and the fact there may have been an original Italian version of his long poem in Latin *Niger Mundus*.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, we will never truly know to what extent Italian influenced the composition of texts in other languages until we have a more definitive archive (and even then, it is possible that these Italian originals may have been completely destroyed).

The need to portray Villa's refusal of Italian as a form of political engagement is, in my opinion, the product of a trend running throughout the criticism that deals with Italian poetry in the second half of the 20th century. The debates between Pasolini's *Officina* and the members of the burgeoning neo-avant-garde, the publication of the *Novissimi* anthology, and the formation of Gruppo '63, brought critics of poetry under the spell that experimental writing and politics go hand in hand. This relationship between poetry and politics in Italy from the late Fifties through the Eighties is so variegated that it can in no way be summed up briefly. Every author associated with the neo-avant-garde, whether it was a diehard cadre like Edoardo Sanguineti or a loose

¹¹⁶ U. Fracassa, "Villa in Ytalya," in *Segnare un secolo...etc.*, p. 157.

¹¹⁷ See note #5 on p. 8.

affiliate like Adriano Spatola, approached the topic in his or her own way and to a different degree.¹¹⁸ It is safe to say, however, that there was a general propensity to resist the dominant capitalist culture that ran rampant in Italy after the Second World War. Take, as an example, one of Giuliani's statements from his introduction to the *Novissimi* anthology:

Poiché tutta la lingua tende oggi a diventare una merce, non si può prendere per dati né una parola né una forma grammaticale né un solo sintagma. [...] La passione di parlare in versi urta, da un lato, contro l'odierno avvolgente consumo e sfruttamento commerciale cui la lingua è sottoposta; dall'altro, contro il suo codice letterario, che conserva l'inerzia delle cose, e istituisce l'*abuso di consuetudine* (il fittizio "è così") nella visione dei rapporti umani.¹¹⁹

Since the 20th century's second wave of poetic experimentation came about in a time of social upheaval, most critics have chosen to focus on the relationship between the two, so much so that is rare to see an article on post-war experimental writing that does not in some way drag in politics.

Critics writing on Villa are not immune to this trend. Many try to spin his alleged refusal of Italian (language of the oppressors) as some sort of Marxist rebellion, when, in reality, neither his works, nor his biography, show any formal involvement with politics or its theories. As Sanguineti never tired to repeat, to engage in politics means to engage directly in the surrounding social and historical situation, but Villa operated completely *outside* history. He was more concerned with the primordial state of man, a time free of fixed spatial, temporal, and political boundaries, when expressive materials were raw and the possibilities of shaping them endless. And this description also applies to his poetry: unlike certain members of the neo-avant-garde, he wasn't interested in working within the language of a given historical moment, but rather in

¹¹⁸ All literature can, in some way, be construed as a political act, but at what point does poetry actually become a form of political action?

¹¹⁹ A. Giuliani, "Introduzione," in *I Novissimi: Poesie per gli anni '60* (1965), a cura di Alfredo Giuliani, Torino: Einaudi, 2003, p.18.

stripping language down to its most ancient roots, circumnavigating recorded history all together. In other words, although his texts were composed in a certain historical time period, Villa treated them as if they were primordial writings, enigmatic symbols carved onto a page.

Having crossed the terrain inhabited by various poets – such as Ezra Pound, Lewis Carroll, Giovanni Pascoli, Giuseppe Ungaretti – or groups – such as Hermeticism, Neorealism, Pasolini's *Officina*, and the “concrete” writers of Brazil – in our attempt to situate Villa's work within the 20th century, it is now time tackle the *vexata quaestio* of Villa's rapport with the second wave of Italian experimentalism: the Novissimi, Gruppo '63 and the Neo-Avant-Garde. As Alfredo Giuliani was selecting the poets to be included in his *Novissimi* anthology, published in 1961, Emilio Villa had already published three collections and several individual poems that harmonize with the definition of “research poetry.” The Novissimi were in no way a group, but rather a loose affiliation of different writers with rather varied poetics between them operating under one general purpose, as Giuliani explicitly states in his introduction to the anthology, that of revitalizing language: “Scopo della vera contemporanea poesia è di accrescere la vitalità.”

¹²⁰ And a few pages later in that same introduction:

Una poesia è vitale quando ci spinge oltre i propri inevitabili limiti, quando cioè le cose che hanno ispirato le sue parole [...] ci inducono il senso di altre cose e di altre parole, provocando il nostro intervento; si deve poter profittare di una poesia come di un incontro un po' fuori dell'ordinario.¹²¹

¹²⁰ A. Giuliani, *Introduzione*, in *I Novissimi*, etc., p. 15.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p. 20.

The various examples provided thus far throughout this study already show that Villa's work would have fit nicely within the Novissimi's poetic scope. However, he was not invited to participate in Giuliani's anthology.¹²²

The common opinion at the time, however, was that none of the Novissimi – Alfredo Giuliani, Nanni Balestrini, Elio Pagliarani, and Antonio Porta – knew of Villa's work. Any acknowledgment of it would only come years later. For example, in his *Pro-memoria a Liarosa*, Pagliarani only mentions Villa when his autobiography arrives at the 70s, as one of those poets he invited to participate in his seminars held in Rome:

Invitai a collaborare con me, una serata ciascuno, Toti Scialoja, Alfredo Giuliani, Gianni Rodari ed Emilio Villa. Vennero tutti tranne Emilio Villa che allora incontravo spesso e me l'aveva più di una volta promesso. Dopo che non venne al laboratorio e gliene chiesi il perché lui mi disse in sostanza che ero troppo collaborativo, andavo d'accordo con troppi. Non me la presi, né mutò il mio interesse anche per l'ultima fase duchampiana noiosa e disperata del suo lavoro.¹²³

Balestrini, also in the 70s, would help publish two of Villa's texts while he worked for the publishing house Feltrinelli: a collection of his essays on contemporary art, *Attributi dell'arte odierna 1947/1967* (1970) and a new, revised edition of his translation of the *Odyssey* (1972).

Then, in 1989, he wrote that forceful paragraph in his novel *L'editore*:

[...] la sera che è venuta quella sera sui quadrelli rossi delle macerie e vari caseggiati un partigiano della gap un tipo evoluto sanguinario e buono aveva il braccio insecchito senti ancora tre ariette di sudore sull'addome nell'erba dei capezzoli e sotto il coppino e un fil di refe rosso un filo di sangue dal costato la febbre grattava dove c'è la cintura del corame era il grano profumato che verrà dall'Urss in una volta sola una vera manifestazione

¹²² We should say that Villa never actively sought out the Novissimi either, and there is no mention of them anywhere in his writings. Therefore, we can only speculate as to why: his rather singular poetic interests kept him from collaborating with others and maybe he thought he had already been carrying out this “revitalization of language” for years, and like Edoardo Cacciatore, did not feel the Novissimi were doing anything terribly “new.”

¹²³ E. Pagliarani, *Pro-memoria a Liarosa (1979-2009)*, Marsilio, Venezia 2011, p. 298.

pensò e chiuse gli occhi che erano già da spaccare col martello come ha scritto Emilio Villa cioè il più grande poeta italiano degli anni 40 altro che Montale [...].¹²⁴

And finally Giuliani reviewed *Emilio Villa: Opere poetiche – I* for the Italian newspaper “la Repubblica” in September of 1990:

Negli anni passati è stato difficile, se non impossibile, farsi un'immagine della poesia di Emilio Villa, perché questa poesia ha fatto di tutto per non esistere. Certo, si tratta di una situazione paradossale e sotto alcuni aspetti mostruosa. Non mi riferisco tanto al fatto che per decenni i testi di Villa hanno avuto una vita pressoché clandestina, sommersa in edizioni rare o marginali, tirature ristrettissime, riviste e fogli d'avanguardia di scarsissima diffusione. [...] mi riferisco piuttosto a un fatto più radicale, interno alla poesia, un fatto che rende al tempo stesso autodistruttiva e provocatoria la situazione di Villa scrittore. Furente imitatore, contaminatore, disgregatore di forme e linguaggi, Villa appartiene alla razza degli arrabbiati cronici, dei patiti dell'umor nero, di coloro che, lo sappiano o no, discendono dall'anarchico decadente Tristan Corbière, il poeta che provò felicemente l'ebbrezza dell'intruglio adultero di tutto, il primo dei premoderni a praticare una poetica disarticolante e schizomorfa.¹²⁵

Therefore, at least in more recent years, Villa was known and appreciated by at least three of the Novissimi.¹²⁶ While the statements made by Pagliarani and Porta are little more than brief notes, Giuliani's article constitutes a more profound critical reflection and pinpoints precisely a few fundamental aspects of Villa's poetics. Further along in the review we just cited, he observes that Villa's poetry is the “conseguenza [...] del silenzio originario che la voce del poeta vanamente tenta di raggiungere. Sempre più lontana dal mitico tempo cosmogonico, la nostra voce si corrompe, si moltiplica, incanaglisce, balbetta, parla un niente verboso e buffonesco”.¹²⁷

Giuliani highlights how for Villa writing poetry was an act of verbal terrorism and how that poetry can generate the same sense of liberty experienced by primordial man at that moment

¹²⁴ N. Balestrini, “Scena sesta”, in *L'editore*, Bompiani, Milano 1989. The novel is available online at nannibalestrini.it/editore.

¹²⁵ A. Giuliani, *Villa e l'umor nero*, in “La Repubblica”, 12 settembre 1990, p. 33.

¹²⁶ In speaking with Antonio Porta's wife, Rosemary, I discovered that he also knew of Villa but not until much later and only as an art critic and visual artists, not as a poet.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*.

in which the world is named for the first time. Guliani, more as a fellow poet than a critic, adheres enthusiastically to Villa's idea: the further we distance ourselves from that original linguistic chaos, the more our poetic voice becomes a pale simulacrum of it.

Two of the three Novissimi we have cited, also touch upon Villa's "anti-social" behavior, in that he was very selective of his companions and the venues through which he published his work. Furthermore, he never tried to hide the disdain he felt for groups and movements. In one of his verses in French from his own journal *Ex*, we read "la vacuité, toute italienne, des professionnels en "poésie moderne,""¹²⁸ which Tagliaferri interprets to be aimed at Gruppo '63, the larger experimental group to come after the Novissimi.

As irascible and surly as Villa's character may have been, some of his texts, which glaringly manifested a tendency for "research," had been published just a few years before the compilation of the Novissimi anthology, and therefore were available to whoever wanted to read them. They are *17 variazioni* (1955), *Imprimatur* (1958), and *Comizio 1953* (1959). Is it possible that these writings did not reach the Novissimi? Given the scarce distribution these texts received, we may suppose the editor of that anthology ignored Villa's work; and, furthermore, even if he was familiar with it, that does not mean they were obligated to include it. Some critics have speculated on a veto by Sanguineti to include Villa, one motivated by the superficial similarities of their respective styles. Yet as an attentive study by Tagliaferri shows, it is easy to

¹²⁸ Despite the fact that Tagliaferri maintains that Villa "certainly had Gruppo '63 in mind," nowhere do we explicitly read the name of the group. As far as we know, it could have been used in reference to Eugenio Montale, who, in one his article from 1962, entitled *Opere aperte*, criticizes Villa's work, stating: "S'intende che non occorre spingersi a tali estremi per ottenere opere aperte: entrano in questa classificazione le musiche atonali e le pitture informali [...] ed anche, aggiungo io, il recente poema multilingue *Heura rium* di Emilio Villa, scritto in sumero, in latino, francese, inglese e occasionalmente in italiano." This article can now be found in Montale's *Auto da fé: Cronache in due tempi*, il Saggiatore, Milano 1966, pp. 196-200. Villa's verse comes from "Ex", 3 (1965) and Tagliaferri's hypothesis may be found on page 116 of his *Il clandestino*, etc.

see how the two poets' writings are, in reality, very different, both from ideological and stylistic points of view:

Deciso a collaborare alla realizzazione dell'esodo collettivo dalla "preistoria" capitalistica e a sostenere l'assunto secondo il quale la letteratura "è rivoluzione sul terreno della parola", Sanguineti punta sempre più decisamente, nell'arco della sua poesia che va da *Laborintus* a *Postkarten*, sulla dimensione sociale del linguaggio, sull'effettualità che sostanzia la sua poesia, costruita per sovrapposizioni, mentre Villa, anche prima dell'incontro ufficiale con Duchamp, sottrae la poesia alle urgenze dei tempi precari e allude a possibilità di discorso per subito negarle disseminandone il senso.¹²⁹

Tagliaferri makes a distinction between the "overlappings" of Sanguineti and the possibilities expressed and immediately negated by Villa. The former intends to bring about a revolution on the linguistic level, and therefore sees politics and intervening within his contemporary society as the ultimate scope of poetry. Villa, instead, is not concerned with history: his verbal production focuses on the "making" of language, the manipulation of the mechanisms that comprise it, and strives to inhabit a mythical dimension, one that can not be verified by history.

If, then, Villa's absence cannot be attributed to the stylistic similarities between his writings and those of Sanguineti, how do we explain it? The perusal of Giuliani's papers held at the Fondo Manoscritti at the University of Pavia holds a few surprises. There, in fact, we find various lists penned by Giuliani that contain possible poets to include the *Novissimi* anthology, lists containing names like Volponi, Majorino, Ferretti, Cacciatore, Guglielmi, Leonetti, Risi, Isgro, Cattafi, Erba, Giudici, Pasolini, Leonetti. Despite the great quantity and variety of poets that appear on those lists, we do not read the name Villa, who is even closer to the *Novissimi* sensibility than a few of the poets Giuliani seems to consider in this initial phase.

Although it did not make its way onto these lists, we do read Villa's name in a letter Sanguineti sent to Giuliani, dated the 22nd of August 1960, which says: "*Eidos* esce per un

¹²⁹ A. Tagliaferri, *Occasioni villiane*, in "Baldus", etc., pp. 34-35.

numero unico romano preparato da Vivaldi, Villa e Diacono.”¹³⁰ This document outwardly demonstrates that at least Sanguineti and Giuliani knew who Villa was at the time. And not only: the work of Sanguineti, Vivaldi, Villa, and Diacono were supposed to appear together in one volume precisely at the same time Giuliani was composing his anthology.¹³¹ The letter also shows us that Sanguineti did not object to publishing his own verses alongside those of Villa, which in turn confirms Tagliaferri’s intuition regarding the radical differences between these two writers. Despite the fact that we have succeeded in giving a little order to this Novissimi/Villa question, the reasons why Villa was not considered for their anthology still remain a mystery. Yet the exclusion, we repeat, is conspicuous given the quality of his research and the fact that he was dedicated to it from the very beginning.

Much like Pasolini and the members of “Officina” before them, the Novissimi tried to separate themselves from the previous poetic group of the Hermetics. Besides transforming poetry into a form of political engagement, one of the ways in which this new poetic association distanced itself from the old guard was that of calling for the reduction of the “I.” As Antonio Porta succinctly puts it in the back of their anthology:

Base negativa ai problemi di soluzione, in parte irrazionale, è l’avversione per il *poeta-io*, quello che ci racconta la sua storia. Per costui ciò che gli capita è, proprio in quanto gli capita, estremamente interessante. Egli fa parte di quella schiera di neo-crepuscolari che si fanno fotografare con il profilo un po’ appuntito sullo sfondo di emblematici fiumi. Non si creda sia normale avversione per i padri e di amore per i nonni: anche i nonni non ispirano simpatia; forse solo gli avi lontanissimi.¹³²

¹³⁰ The merit of this archival discovery goes to Federico Milone, who graciously provide me with a copy of it and who I will thank here for his generosity.

¹³¹ This “Roman issue” never came out. Regarding this very matter, I contacted Mario Diacono, who has confirmed that the project was shelved, but nevertheless served as the basis for another volume *Poesia satirica nell’Italia d’oggi*, edited by Cesare Vivaldi, (Parma: Guanda, 1964), in which appear poems by Sanguineti, Villa, e Diacono.

¹³² A. Porta, “Poesia e poetica,” in *I Novissimi etc.*, pp. 193-194.

Yet in some cases the ancestors were not too distant, as Porta seems to imply. A few poets operating at the time, either within the Novissimi or on the fringe of it, show affinities with their fathers in the reduction of the “I”; they just did not necessarily hail from the field of poetry. One of these predecessors can be found in the theater of Luigi Pirandello, particularly that of *Uno, nessuno, e centomila*. First, the title can be read as triad (the author playing at the same time himself, nobody, and a hundred thousand), which diminishes the author’s presence throughout the work.

Such is the case of the poetry of Antonio Delfini,¹³³ who, by interacting with a number of fictional characters and hiding behind alter egos, moves the perspective of his work away from that of the “I” and opens it up to a gamut of new ones, in turn allowing the reader not only to identify with certain characters but also to expand on Delfini’s fictional biography. A similar argument applies to the theatrical dimension of Elio Pagliarani’s poetry. His work does not stem from the “I” as it does with Delfini, but rather from the *nessuno*; in a poem like *La ragazza Carla* the author is nowhere to be seen, but rather pieces of him are embodied by the various characters of the work, in a sense allowing him to be nowhere and everywhere at the same time. The end result is the same as that of Delfini’s: the reduction of the “I” through the creation of characters permits the reader more freedom.

With regards to Villa, however, we could read Pirandello’s title not as triad but rather as a sequence: to reduce his presence, the author passes through nobody in order to become a hundred thousand different things. In other words, he strips his own identity down to nothing not to create

¹³³ Delfini was not a member of the Novissimi, and like Villa, was not considered for their anthology. He was mainly an author of prose, yet his only collection of verse *Le poesie della fine del mondo* (1961) was published the same years as *I Novissimi*. However, individual poems had been circulating throughout Italy prior to 1961. Given the “theatrical” quality of Delfini’s verse, it would be interesting to compare it with that of the Novissimo, Elio Pagliarani.

a theatre of other characters but rather a theater of language, in which the mechanisms of poetry become the protagonists because they are freed from any point of origin, sender, or addresser. Take for example, the his long poem *Sì, ma lentamente*: the work starts out in a somewhat linear manner as different subjects guide the language, yet the poem quickly digresses and unravels through a series of twist and turns that make it almost impossible to connect any of the predicates to a specific subject. Abandoned amid this chaos, the reader is left only with language and is forced to engage it head on, not through the mere construction of new meaning but rather, as the poet himself, through the actual manipulation of its language. Thus, as a protagonist, language simultaneously speaks and is spoken, allowing for a multitude of new combinations to arise.¹³⁴

More than with the official groups that comprise the Italian neo-avant-garde, such as the Novissimi or Gruppo '63, Villa's poetic influence was felt on its fringe, specifically on the younger poets like Adriano Spatola, Giulia Niccolai, and Patrizia Vicenelli and Corrado Costa. Unlike the Novissimi, these poets not only openly recognized the presence of this older maestro throughout the late 60s and early 70s, but also credited him on many occasions as inspiration on their work. Furthermore, the poetic experiments of this younger generation led to multiple collaborations with Villa: they invited him to participate in their endeavors and he, them. It is safe to suppose that these relationships were formed because their explicit acknowledgement of Villa was probably flattering to the elder poet after so many years of being ignored (while the more prominent members of Gruppo '63 invited Giuseppe Ungaretti to their meetings, this fringe

¹³⁴ This too is most likely a consequence of Villa's Biblical studies. It is not by chance that his early translations of the Hebrew Bible were published under the title *Antico teatro ebraico*, a work contemporaneous to the long poem *Sì ma lentamente*. Furthermore, at the end of his "Confidenze degli autori" in *Italia che scrive. Rassegna per il mondo che legge* (N. 1-2, 1942-XX, p.39), Villa mentions the forthcoming publication of three theatrical works: "*Prigione di pioggia, Santa Teresa del Bambin Gesù, and 3,38 e 90, apologia del gioco del lotto, come disperata magia proletaria.*" Naturally, the fate of these works is unknown.

was looking to Villa for his poetic wisdom), and these younger writers actually employed many of the techniques Villa forged himself and elaborated on them in their own manner.

For example, one of the ancient techniques Villa utilized to expand the signifying potential, that of the litany, was later appropriated by Adriano Spatola. Like the call and response exchanged between a priest and worshipers, or a primitive tribe working itself into the syncopated rhythm of a chant, Villa relied on the repetition of a single word or phrase throughout his poems in order to empty them of their inherited meanings and refill them with new ones. As Spatola himself comments: “In effetti nella poesia di Villa balza subito agli occhi la ricerca di una *litania ostinata* che possa tentare di giungere, per successive infinite approssimazioni, alla scoperta della parola esatta, definitiva, capace di cogliere il centro del caos.”¹³⁵ Paradoxically, Villa uses the litany to provide a sort of harmony to the linguistic chaos he builds: on the one hand, the repetition of certain phrases allows readers a pause, a chance to momentarily rein in the poem just before it completely unravels, while on the other it serves as a sort of pivot that completely changes the direction of the poem, or as a benchmark signaling an abrupt shift, the sudden end of one thread and the brusque introduction of another. It is as if these anaphoras act as the lungs of the poem, inhaling all the meaning found in a certain section of the poem and then exhaling it when that section finished; a process which is constantly in flux.

When, through the litany, the meaning of the poem is exhaled or purged, it reaches, at that particular point, a zero degree, an almost complete absence of meaning that waits to be refilled. A similar example of such a litany can be found in Spatola’s *Boomerang*, which begins

¹³⁵ A. Spatola, “Cosmogonia pubblica e privata,” in *Uomini e Idee*, etc., p. 60.

with the verse “arma che torna contro se stessa [...]”¹³⁶ In fact, we could say that the litany functions as a boomerang, as a ‘weapon that turns on itself.’ Through a litany, signification is launched from a point of origin, it covers a certain area of discourse, and then returns back to the same point of origin so the process of sending out meaning can be repeated again. And, much like in Villa’s work, Spatola uses a refrain throughout this poem which is emptied and refilled of meaning as the poem progresses: “ma questi morti di fame invadono le piazze, rovinano il / selciato, si bagnano con l’acque degli idranti”¹³⁷

Spatola’s poetic companion at the time, Giulia Niccolai, composed a sort of ode to Villa, *E.V. Ballad*, which opens her collection *Russky Salad Ballads 1975-1977*. In her notes accompanying the poem, Niccolai not only speaks of Villa with great admiration, but also offers useful insight into his work. As we read from her notes accompanying the text:

[...] questa ballata, composta come le successive con un’insalata russa di quattro lingue (italiano, francese, tedesco, inglese), deriva dai testi plurilinguistici di Emilio Villa, e attraverso di essa cerco di raccontare l’ammirazione, il divertimento, il senso di libertà e di gioia che lui personalmente e la sua opera, fitta di giochi di parole, mi sapevano dare.¹³⁸

Niccolai openly adopts a Villian approach in that the text is inhabited by a *mélange* (or Russian salad) of languages and employs many of the ludic word games Villa relied upon so heavily throughout his own texts. Furthermore, Niccolai’s composes this ode the same that Villa would have in writing his own poetic criticisms for the work of others: rather than striving to clarify the meaning of the work in question, which is the typical aim of the critic, Villa would appropriate its mechanisms and use them to create ulterior signification in his own verse. Thus, right away,

¹³⁶ A. Spatola, *Boomerang*, in *The Position of Things: Collected Poems, 1961-1992*, edited by Beppe Cavatorta, Los Angeles: Green Integer, 2008.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹³⁸ G. Niccolai, *Traduzione e analisi della “E.V. Ballad,”* in *Poesie & Oggetti*, a cura di Milli Graffi, Firenze: Le Lettere, 2012, p. 146.

we find that Niccolai understood Villa's process and, as a result, chose to appropriate his word play in relaying her personal rapport with him. This is important because many poets have tried to concoct similar odes to Villa in verse, but Niccolai's is by far the most successful precisely because it elevates language over meaning. All the others are either empty copies of Villa's work (failing to appropriate and elaborate) or saccharine recounts.¹³⁹

In fact, although the notes accompanying her poem seek to somewhat clarify its meaning, allowing the reader to become privy to the many lines of the poem as she shares amusing anecdotes regarding her interaction with Villa, the word play actually wonderfully undermines that meaning, demonstrating how Villa so often strove for language to betray its author. And this is the aspect I would like to briefly highlight in Niccolai's poem for Villa: how the language comes to beautifully betray its author, allowing for new associations to be formulated.

For example, many of the anecdotes have to do with Villa's trip to the San Francisco Bay Area to visit his son, who was working as a physicist for NASA just outside Los Altos.¹⁴⁰ At a certain point in the poem Niccolai cites one of the English poems Villa composed during that very trip:

Off Frisco *uper the bay*
when rose fingere'd dawn
shone forth that day

In the accompanying note we read: "*uper the bay* è scritto in corsivo perché è una citazione dal suo testo *Brunt H*, in un inglese parzialmente inventato (*uper* non esiste, ma l'ho interpretato

¹³⁹ With regard to the former, see the many poems "modeled" after Villa's work in the recently published *Parabol(ich)e dell'ultimo giorno. Per Emilio Villa*, a cura di Enzo Campi, Milano: Dot.com Press, 2013. For examples of the latter see N. Balestrini's *CentoVilla* in E. Villa, *Poeta e scrittore*, etc., p. 391.

¹⁴⁰ Niccolai, in her notes, mistakenly calls the city Los Alamos, which is in Texas.

come *over*, sopra).¹⁴¹ There does exist *upper*, which is a common occurrence in English and could have been meant as *the upper bay*, as in the northern part of the Bay Area. It is possible that Villa simply misspelled it and used a syntax that would be wrong according to the rules of standard English. *Uper*, with one “p,” could also be a portmanteau word: a combination of “up” and “over,” the second consonant being removed to emphasize the phonetic similarity between “over” and Villa’s neologism “uper.” This would support Niccolai’s interpretation, but we should add that to a native speaker of English, the removal of the second “p” creates a softer sound that when pronounced would resemble *up ‘er*, as in *up her*. If we combine this with the fact that the word for bay in Italian is feminine, *baia*, we find there is a subtler linguistic mix at work: English being re-written in order to suit an Italian engendering of language.

The most fruitful, and most amusing, of Niccolai’s anecdotes comes in reference to Villa’s work on the Bible:

Emilio raccontava di aver sempre lavorato alle sue interminabili traduzioni (dell’Odissea e della Bibbia in aramaico), in cucina, intento anche a sorvegliare sughi e intingoli, brasati, spezzatini o minestrone, comunque piatti a lunga cottura [...]. Egli amava praticare coi cibi associazioni inedite e bizzarre [...]: nelle minestre *versava* quasi sempre, a tavola, un bicchiere di vino, commentando che così arrossata, la zuppa diviene uno “scattone.”¹⁴²

I have italicized Niccolai’s use of the word “*versava*” because, in my opinion, it underscores one of the most important techniques that Villa employed in order to create his linguistic “scattone” (unleashing), which she herself emulates in the very first lines of her poem by playing in the phonetic similarities between Villa’s initials and other words:

Evening and the everest

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.148. The citation does not come from *Brunt H*, as Niccolai states, but rather from another poem, partly in English, composed around the same period, *Ash overritual*, Roma: Luqsor, 1964.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

ist vers la poetry leaning.¹⁴³

The word play not only calls attention to the phonetic affinities between Villa's initials and words like "evening" or mount "Everest," but also to the very act of writing poetry. Whether the author knew this or not, she is also highlighting an etymological game at play, one that Villa himself would have utilized: the first two letters of *vers* are his initials in "reverse" and furthermore Niccolai's approach to honoring Villa by employing his same techniques is an act of "re-versing." As a result, his "pouring" (*versare*) wine in order to create a "scattone" becomes symbolic of the act of unleashing a polysemy of meaning through poetry. Furthermore, the association between the etymological origins of "versare" and "verso" in turn unleash a number of other associations that can be made throughout Villa's work: *versus* in Latin comes from *vertere*, to furrow a field, pointing to the material alterations Villa makes to language; *versus* also meant to turn back on itself, showing similarities to the litanies Villa used; *verbal* points to the phonetic predilection Villa showed in his work, and so on. Therefore, by highlighting the phonetic semblance between Villa's initials and the act of writing poetry, Niccolai also creates her own "scattone," bringing to our attention all the different ways in which Villa played on the etymology of single words throughout his work.

An investigation of Villa's rapport with the poets lying on the fringe of the neo-avant-garde would not be complete without mentioning Patrizia Vicinelli, whose work, of all the younger poets operating on the fringe of the neo-avant-garde, was the closest to resemble Villa's.¹⁴⁴ In the second paragraph of her *Second time: a Emilio Villa*, Vicinelli creates a sort of dialogue with herself in which Villa's influence is described:

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁴⁴ Villa's influence on Vicinelli is in fact so strong that it would be difficult to find examples when she does not limit herself to closely following Villa's poetic activities.

Lo volevi indaffarato nel suo atto supremo il tuo eroe così a lungo distrutto e demolito, pezzo per pezzo imbevuto nel suo grigiore, con una spinta all'eccedenza di un dinamico andare contro le certezze, quelle dell'io, quelle del mondo. In un progetto perenne di trasgressione, sempre con altre morali, più che altro senza morali, il senso etico diviene il fare.¹⁴⁵

What she saw in Villa, then, was an impetus to go against every certainty, to constantly transgress, and to adhere to an ethic of making. In fact, it is curious to note that this sense of “ethic” is already inscribed in the word “poetics” (po/etico or po-ethics), which joins a sense of principle with the idea of making. Therefore, with Villa *etico* becomes *poetico*: the only principle being that of making language; the poet is the *fabbro* who is responsible for the act of linguistic creation.

It is this very poetics of shaping language, both graphically and phonetically, that immediately bonded the two poets and led Vicinelli to elaborate upon the most fruitful experiments Villa carried out in the 60s and 70s. This bond began to form around 1961 when Villa invited Vicinelli to contribute to his magazine “Ex.”¹⁴⁶ Just flipping through the pages of the first issue of “Ex” Villa’s influence on Vicinelli become apparent: her stanzas expand and contrast in size, shift direction on the pages (at times, turning completely up-side-down); certain words are written in all caps and parsed to emphasize individual morphemes; and finally huge gaps are opened on the page.

¹⁴⁵ P. Vicinelli, *Second time: a Emilio Villa*, in *Non sempre si ricordano. Poesia, Prosa, Performance*, a cura di Cecilia Bello Minciocchi, Firenze: Le Lettere, 2009, p. 376.

¹⁴⁶ Edited by Mario Diacono and Emilio Villa, “Ex” was published annually between 1961 and 1965. While the first four can be said to be actual issues of the magazine, the fifth was more a poster-size pamphlet. This magazine was also conceived as an experiment in the fleeting nature of art: the issues were unbound and each poem included was printed on its own folio. Furthermore, the materials used for the cover and paper were extremely poor, mostly cardboard, for which most of the copies in circulation have degraded with time. Its contributors include, among others: Stelio Maria Martini, John Cage, The Campos Brothers, Adriano Spatola, and William Burroughs.

As we previously said, Villa used these blank spaces to emphasize the abyss, the origins from which language is created. This, along with other techniques indicative of a concern for origins, are appropriated by Vicinelli. Take, for example, the title of her first collection from 1967: *à, a. A*, whose first section, which contains a number of visual poems, bears a dedication to Emilio Villa. The different presentations of this first letter of the alphabet (accented, followed by a period, or capitalized) resemble those found in Villa's *ultimatum à la corrrrée* included in his *Heurarium* five years earlier:

```

ultima      AA
AA. AAA. A.AA
AAAAAA A A A
AAAAAA A.AA.
A. AAA.AA.A.A.
AAAAAA A A A
AAAAAA A t u m
tu tu tu tu tu tum
1 x 1 x 2 1x1 x1x
1 x aux aux aux
[...]147

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The letter A is not only the first letter of the alphabet, but “alpha” also implies a beginning, a linguistic origin. In Villa, we also read “A t u m,” which plays on the phonetics of “atom,” giving a sense that like the atom is building block of life, so is the A for language. Further elaborating on the metaphor both Vicinelli’s title and Villa’s text use the letter in a sequence as if it were almost a strain of DNA, constructed of the same elements in different combinations. In Villa’s text we also find different compositions of the letter: accented in the title, used in uppercase throughout the body of the poem, and interrupted by periods, which Vicinelli borrows in her title. Villa, as we remember, employed the period in his early poem *Linguistica* (“Non c’è più origini. Né. Né si può sapere se.”) to cause a disturbance in the discourse immediately after it has begun. In *ultimatum*, instead, the period is used to contrast the origins of language, literally

¹⁴⁷ E. Villa, *ultimatum à la corrrrée*, in *Heurarium*, Roma: Edizioni Ex, 1961, p. 35.

denoting the end. Thus, in Vicinelli's title and Villa's poem we have a series of little origins that begin and immediately end through the mere repetition of the letter A.

Although her predilection for the phonetic ground of language is, in this previous example, in its infancy, it would eventually grow to become the defining characteristic of her work. For example, in her *I fondamenti dell'essere* from 1987 a few poems are accompanied by lists of phonemes that create a poem of pure sound alongside the original composition:

2.1 IL TEMPO DI SATURNO

Ancora poco e dal **t**empio dove
sussurrano le idee esse **s**i sveleranno
quando la brezza darà inizio al loro
manifestarsi. Proserpina la **s**i incontra
allora, e **r**ende grazia alla sua **r**egina e
si inginocchia, al sogno del suo **n**ome
ho posto la **f**ine.

[...] ¹⁴⁸

2.2- FONETICA

AN TEM
SIS
QUAN
SER-SIN
REN RE
NO NO NO
INE

And Villa, around that same time, composed similar phoneme lists in his *Verboracula*:

sta	men		stlo	cus	is	
	sis				te	
ne	sit	stat	in		si	q[uae]
	ul	us			sti[r]ps	
	ne	vi	sen		tlo	ci
			sus	ni	lo	cis
			mis		oc	ul i
nec	sit	nex	it			is
		ac	sat			ti

[...] ¹⁴⁹

While both create pieces of pure sound, Vicinelli bolds and separates certain phonemes from an original text to create an entirely different poem of sound. In fact, Vicinelli later took things a step further by adding a performative quality to her poetry. The DVD accompany her collected

¹⁴⁸ P. Vicinelli, *Il tempo di Saturno*, in *Non sempre si ricordano* etc., p. 215.

¹⁴⁹ E. Villa, *Pythica vana*, in *Verboracula*, in *Zodiaco* etc., p. 96.

verse includes a declamation of this poem, in which Vicinelli reads the original while a recording of her voice reciting the highlighted phonemes overlaps with it. The effect is that these phonemes echo throughout that theater, as if they were breaking away from the original poem to move outwards in pursuit of their own destiny. With Vicinelli, then, there is a sort of phonetic metamorphosis: as it is declaimed, the word becomes ever more ephemeral, disappearing off the page and fading into thin air. Villa, on the other hand, never declaimed his work, which may seem odd given that there is an overwhelming phonetic quality to it.¹⁵⁰

Prior to closing this section on Villa within the landscape of the 20th century, I would like to briefly touch up one last poetic figure with whom he collaborated later in life: Luciano Caruso. With respect to Spatola, Niccolai, or Vicinelli, Caruso operated within the outermost fringe of the neo-avant-garde. While the poetic experiments being carried out in northern Italy, in places like Milan and Bologna, were receiving the most attention, Caruso and a small group of poets and visual artists were working in Naples (whose poetic scene has yet to be analyzed by any critics). In Caruso, Villa instilled the idea that most of the innovations carried out in the 20th century were not novelties, but rather had already come to fruition centuries before. Or as Villa would put it, millennia before: “Ai superficiali che obbiettano che l’invenzione nonfigurativa è vecchia di quarant’anni, noi obbiettiamo che invece essa è vecchia di cinquantamila anni.”¹⁵¹ Caruso, in fact, wrote a dissertation on how the Futurists’ *parole in libertà* had already been anticipated by visual poems written in Latin throughout the Medieval and Renaissance periods, such as the “Tetragramma” found in the 1472 edition of Isodoro di Siviglia’s *De natura rerum*. Villa, who viewed modern abstract painters as nothing more than skilled Neanderthals (which

¹⁵⁰ I suspect that Villa avoided reading because he did not one recitation to dominate the other possible ways of declaiming his work.

¹⁵¹ E. Villa, *Noi e la preistoria*, in “Arti visive,” n.1, Roma, 1954.

from him was a compliment), admired Caruso's exploration of early forms of visual poetry. Not only did the duo collaborate on a number of projects in which one created a visual piece alongside a linear poem by the other, they also combined forces to assemble a number of palimpsests, writing their poetry between the lines of other authors or the images of visual artists, the aforementioned *All'UPIM è già Natale* principal among them.¹⁵²

I would like to close this section just as we began it by returning to the American poetic scene. While visiting his son in Palo Alto, Villa met the poet Phillip Lamantia, and immediately composed *Ash Overritual* in his honor. As the dedication of the piece states: "Emilio Villa to Philippe Lamantia *Horroris causa*," in which Villa underscores the often grotesque and terrifying nature of the Beatnik's verse. The poem was composed in 1964. I have yet to find any evidence if Lamantia responded with his own poem to Villa, or if the two had planned any collaborations. Furthermore, while skimming through Villa's archives in Reggio Emilia I came across a letter from the American poet Charles Bernstein. In it, Bernstein states that he admires Villa's work, which shows many affinities with the Language poets of the United States. Further along, he asks Villa if they would like to meet while he is visiting Rome and discuss a possible collaboration. Intrigued by the letter, I contacted Bernstein who told me the meeting never happened.

¹⁵² See page 54.

A Poet of Biblical Proportions

The history of the Bible resembles the game of telephone children play in the classroom: someone picks a word, whispers it to a classmate, and the action is repeated until it reaches the last child in the room, who pronounces the word for all to hear. The game results in a drastic alteration of what was originally spoken. For example, passing from mouth to ear, from person to person, the word “orange” somehow morphs into “elephant.” Of course, when it comes to the transmission of the Bible the game was carried out on a much larger scale: all those playing hailed from a different culture, spoke a different language, adhered to a different belief system, and were separated by centuries and, in some cases, even millennia.

At its origins the Bible was an inorganic collection of myths created by a loose network of nomadic tribes who spoke different Semitic dialects roughly between the 12th and 8th centuries BCE. Over time these myths were written down, collected, and transformed into a historical document of the Hebrew people, united under one nation, religion, and language. Then around the middle of the third century BCE, the Hebrew Bible was gradually translated into Koine Greek. When finished in the first century CE, this version, known as the Septuagint for the some seventy scholars who participated in the project, was adopted by Christianity and rejected by Orthodox Judaism. From here, the Father’s of the Church rendered the Pentateuch into Latin and, as it was woven into the later additions of this younger belief system, the Septuagint not only took on the name of the Old Testament (thirty nine books that correspond approximately to the Hebrew Bible), but also came to be viewed as the actual revelation of God’s word.

In his translation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Pentateuch or Torah) into Italian, Emilio Villa eludes all the various redactions, the various

theological deformations, the allegorical readings, and especially the notion of revelation that have come to shape its millennial game of telephone and returns to the source that originally set it in motion; specifically, to those primordial myths in order to reactivate the creative force that has long lied dormant in the recesses of time and to cause an irruption of entirely new meaning in the present.

He does this by looking at the Bible as a literary text and not as doctrine of faith, and therefore is concerned solely with its language. In fact, in the first line of the introduction to his translation of *Genesis* we read:

Questa traduzione del primo libro della bibbia, definito in epoca ellenistica “Genesi” cioè “Origine”, propone l’abbandono della nozione confessionale di rivelazione “divina”, in cui il celebre monumento letterario è andato storicamente a dissolversi. Il teologumeno della “rivelazione”, generica o specifica, “patristica” o “esistenzialistica”, in sé così arido anche per le stravaganti indagini della teologia cristiana, viene, in questa traduzione, globalmente eluso, per una intenzione obbiettiva: esattamente perché nella lettura ebraica a nostra disposizione una nozione autentica di “rivelazione” non è accertabile; o, senz’altro, non è data. E proprio giudicando ogni teologumeno cristiano una opzione artificiale e superflua, un mitologismo in via di deperimento, si rende possibile una cosciente responsabilità di fronte al testo.

[This translation of the first book of the Bible, defined in the Hellenistic era as “Genesis,” that is “Origin,” proposes to abandon the confessional notion of “divine” revelation, in which the celebrated literary moment came to be dissolved historically. The theologumen of “revelation,” either generic or specific, “patristic” or “existentialistic,” so arid due to the extravagant investigations of Christian theology, is, in this translation, entirely eluded, through an objective approach: exactly because in the Hebrew literature at our disposal an authentic notion of “revelation” can not be verified; or, certainly, it is not given. And only by judging every Christian theologumen an artificial and superfluous option, a perishing mythologism, is a conscious responsibility to the text made possible.]¹⁵³

The literary monument to which Villa refers is comprised of those myths belonging to early Semitic cultures. The signifying potential of this early literature was slowly diluted as interpretations of it became codified under various doctrinal systems. Although remnants of this

¹⁵³ E. Villa, *Sulla traduzione di testi biblici*, in “Il Verri,” etc. p. 12. The translations of Villa’s introduction are my own.

“mythology” may still be found in the early Hebrew literature we still have at our disposal, it was later completely drowned under the formation of Christianity. For Villa, the responsibility inherent to translating the Book is to cause these myths to resurface so its language can once again foster a myriad of interpretations.

The myth resists univocal interpretation for its language maintains a tension that causes its meaning to constantly flux. It also lies outside history, in a primordial time of which we have little knowledge, and therefore presents itself as a mystery: there is no certainty as to who its authors were, what they meant in creating the myth, or the circumstance in which they did it. As we read from Villa’s introduction to his translation of the ancient Babylonian cosmogony, the

Enuma Elis:

Il mito è intraducibile, inesplicabile, sempre, senza speranza. Il mito è la strettura tumultuosa ove un sentimento infinito trova stanza. Il suo periodo è un punto, la sua frequenza irreal, fittizia. Qui, può trattarsi di una semplice spiegazione delle origini, evocazione del caos e della sua temprale organizzazione; o di un mito naturistico che contempra la vittoria del sole (Marduk) sui rigori e la morte dell’inverno (Tiamat), l’urto tra due forze della natura; o una simbolizzazione in miti astrali; oppure di tutti questi fatti insieme. E non importa. Il mito non può avere equivalenze, analogie, rapporti dicibili. E il traduttore non può rendere altro che il senso preciso della propria inettitudine. Non può in nessun modo aiutare il lettore. Se lo facesse, lo tradirebbe.

[The myth cannot be translated, it is inexplicable, always, and without hope. The myth is the tumultuous concentration where an infinite feeling finds its home. Its period is a point, its unreal frequency, fiction. This may be a simple explanation of the origins, an evocation of chaos and its temporal organization; or it could be a naturistic myth that contemplates the victory of the sun (Marduk) over the rigors and the death of winter (Tiamat), the clashing between the two forces of nature; or a symbolizing in astral myths; or all of this at once. And it does not matter. The myth cannot have equivalents, analogies, speakable relations. And the translator cannot do anything but render the precise feeling of his own ineptitude. He cannot help his readers in any way. If he did it, he would betray them.]¹⁵⁴

As the quote demonstrates, Villa was interested in reproducing the linguistic tension of these myths, their inexhaustible productivity, and not their specific meaning, for the interpretive

¹⁵⁴ *L’Enuma Elis*, introduzione, traduzione, e note di E. Villa, in “Letteratura: Rivista trimestrale di letteratura contemporanea” XII (1939), p. 2.

possibilities are highly varied. In this sense, the myth holds the same force as an enigma that is impossible to unravel. All the reader can do is continue to empty its meaning without ever exhausting it, for the *Enuma Elis* still preserves all the linguistic power and all the expressive possibilities it had the first day, despite the fact that millennia have passed since its conception.

Villa saw the same paradigm of the *Enuma Elis* in the early myths that led to the formation of the Bible. Actually, when it comes to his translation of *Genesis*, he found that the raw signifying force that allows for multiple interpretations was in an even more concentrated form: this biblical cosmogony was born out of an immense assortment of myths authored throughout the Mediterranean, each recounting a different version of the creation of the universe. Furthermore, for Villa, the many cosmogonic myths of pre-Judaic cultures are not merely stories regarding the creation of the universe, but more specifically tales of man's appropriation of his expressive tools in order to carry out a linguistic genesis:

La “resa visibile” o “sensibile” del divino [...] o la “teofania” [...] sono, nella verifica biblica, di natura mitologica allo stato puro, o allo stato di culto operante. Nei testi delle leggende patriarcali, o ancestrali, nessuna teofania esce da una stretta condizione di etiologia culturale; nei testi cosmogonici nessun referto supera la concezione mitica del *Verbum Naturans*, del *Verbum operante*.

[The act of making the divine “visible” or “felt” [...] or the “theophany” [...] are, in an examination of the Bible, of a mythical nature in a pure form, or in the form of an operating cult. In the texts of the patriarchal, or ancestral, legends, every theophany is tied to a strict condition of cultural etiology; in the cosmogonic text no report exceeds the mythical concept of the *Verbum naturans*, of the *Verbum operante*.]¹⁵⁵

The “*Verbum Naturans*” and the “*Verbum operante*” imply that language gives birth to the world and then subsequently shapes it. Thus, in these lines, Villa begins to overturn the Christian idea of revelation by re-establishing the paradigm of the early myths. The divine is “made visible” by man; it is man who “speaks” the divine or, in many cases, it is man who transgresses the word of the divine to name his own universe. The Christian idea, on the other hand, suggests a god that

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

reveals himself, speaks the universe, and places man within it. In this belief system, god's word is final and man passively adheres to it. The Christian mass still upholds this notion with the liturgical refrain: "This is the word of the Lord, amen."

The concept of God speaking the universe does open the book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible, but this story is much newer with respect to the myth of the "Fall of man" that appears just after it. In fact, that cosmogony is the product of the Hebrew culture united under Moses, whose followers later added it to reflect a monotheistic belief system. However, as Villa tells us, during the period in which the early Semitic tribes were slowly consolidated to form the Hebrew culture the perspectives regarding cosmogony were rather conflicting and fragmented:

Nel corso secolare della fusione dei referti frammentari, era andato consolidandosi una eterogenea e sporadica speculazione di tipo teologico, e, insieme, una naturale prepotente frenesia di certezze simboliche ed emblematiche, in cui soprattutto consiste l'energia conservativa della "religione" degli "ebrei" [...], cioè un insieme di tribù di nomadi per lo più semitiche.

[As the fragmentary reports were fused together over the centuries, there was a consolidation of a heterogeneous and sporadic speculation of a theological kind, as well as a natural aggressive frenzy for symbolic and emblematic certitudes, in which lies the conservative energy of the "religion" of the "Jews" [...], that is a collection of nomadic tribes that were, for the most part, Semitic.]¹⁵⁶

As the Hebrew culture consolidated under monotheism certain redactions were made that ignored a much more varied literary patrimony, one that did not permit such symbolic or emblematic certainties.

From this fragmented mythical literature, Villa draws one particular example that paints a rather different picture of the relationship between the divine and man, as well as the role of the *verbum naturans*, when compared to the later redactions of the Hebrew and Christian doctrines.

A un terzo narrato cosmogonico, che si fonda su vari reperti di una cosmica guerra tra un gruppo di divinità pre-cosmiche, o di forze primordiali, tra loro separate da un Abisso, succede la concezione del primordiale rifiuto da parte dell'uomo (un semi-dio; "forma" del fiato alitante della divinità) alla Parola della divinità; e la conseguente grande saga

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

dell'iter della umanità verso la liberazione, o salvezza, del compimento della propria iniziale destinazione.

[In a third cosmogonic narrative – which is founded on the various reports of cosmic war between a group of pre-cosmic divinities, or primordial forces, separated by an Abyss – we find the concept of the primordial refusal on the part of man (a demigod; “form” of the divine’s outward breath) of the Word of the divine; and the consequent saga of humanity’s move toward liberation, or salvation, of the formation of his initial destiny.]¹⁵⁷

In this myth, we feel the influence of a polytheistic culture as many gods battle for supremacy around an Abyss. Man, previously a demigod in the form of divine breath, comes into being when he refuses the Word of the divine. Here, man creates himself through a linguistic rebellion. He is simultaneously exerting his independence from those gods and taking control of his own divine power: to create through language. Certain aspects of this myth still linger in the “Fall of man” passage in *Genesis*: the discrepancies between *Jahwe* and *Elohim*, man becoming *Elohim* himself, the linguistic transgression of God’s word, and so on.¹⁵⁸ Yet, as we will see shortly, Villa’s re-insertion of this early myth within his translation of the “Fall of man” passage allows Eve’s action of disobeying the word of God not to be taken as a sin but rather as an act of liberation.

As we were saying, the scope of Villa’s translation is to re-instate the signifying force of these various myths within the overall framework of *Genesis*. This raw linguistic power is maintained not only within the paradigms of the individual myths themselves, but also amid the clashing perspectives of these myths: each seems to tell a story that is in conflict with the next, resulting in interpretations that are irreconcilable.

La confusione dei livelli, allora, ha portato a uno svuotamento dei miti e dei simboli arcaici; che, reinterpretati e deformati, poi entrati in collusione con altre nozioni neomesopotamiche, iraniche, e mediterranee, si sono dissolti in nuovi vaghi contenuti dove l’esegesi giudaica, quella ellenistica, e infine il cristianesimo hanno riservato le proprie

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁸ After God banishes him from the Garden, Adam also begins to name the world.

intenzioni e attinto i propri poteri. [...] Per questo, il testo attivo va recuperato, nei limiti del possibile, sotto le manomissioni e i rimaneggiamenti, adattamenti, e obliterazioni.

[Thus, the confusion of the different levels brought about an emptying of the myths and the archaic symbols, which, when re-interpreted, deformed, then forced into collusion with other neo-Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Mediterranean notions, were diluted in new vague contents where the Judaic, Hellenistic, and finally Christian exegeses reserved their own intentions and drew their own power. [...] For this reason, the active text needs to be recovered, as much as this is possible, from under the alterations and the reshufflings, adjustments, and obliterations.]¹⁵⁹

In order to return to the “active text” Villa translates from a sort of biblical collage; an approach that faithfully represents the incompatibility of the various modes of interpretation, as well as the fragmented state of the *Genesis* at its earliest literary conception. For the most part, the source text Villa used in his translation was the Hebrew edition “[...] edited by Alt, Eissfeldt and Kahle, which is based on the complete Masoretic manuscript from around 1000 AD, that is the Leningrad Codex”.¹⁶⁰ This version is widely considered to be the definitive and most reliable edition of the Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures, but Villa prefers to greatly supplement it with the various myths and languages of the tribes that preceded the Hebrew culture.

In fact, further along in his introduction, Villa describes the different schools of ancient Biblical scholars and how each reassembled the text. His position closely resembles that of the *Elohist*:

In un ambito di “scuole” o “sodalizi” profetici, tra secolo IX e VIII a.C., un gruppo di raccoglitori di tradizioni più antiche, o, comunque, premonarchiche (in qualche senso riattate come conservative e antimonarchiche), recupera frammenti ed episodi delle leggende degli antenati, attingendo in parte a documenti orali autonomi, e in parte a referti letterari ancora sporadici in terra palestinese, e da far risalire molto probabilmente a leggende ugaritico-fenicie. [...] L’Elohista fissa una tradizione letteraria agitata da varie influenze culturali e culturali provenienti dalle coste siro-palastinesi; dove si incontrano e ibridano il pensiero orientale e contro-influssi paleomediterranei, la cultura mesopotamica e le tardi referenze della teologia egiziana.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17, note #4.

[With regard to prophetic “schools” or “societies,” between the IX and VIII centuries BC, a group of those who collected traditions that were more ancient, or, in any case, pre-monarchical (in some sense seen as conservative and anti-monarchical), recuperating fragments and episodes of the legends of the ancestors, drawing partly upon autonomous oral documents, and partly upon literary reports scattered throughout the land of Palestine, which probably date back to Ugaritic-Phoenician legends. [...] The Elohist focuses on a literary tradition agitated by the various cultural and cultural influences hailing from the Syro-Palestinian coast, where Oriental thought, Paleomediterranean counter-influxes, Mesopotamian culture, and the late references to Egyptian theology meet to form a hybrid.]¹⁶¹

Recuperating the fragments, the legends, the oral documents, and the sporadic literary references hailing from much more ancient cultures, the Elohist insisted on all the nuances of the biblical text. Instead, the school in direct opposition to the Elohist, the Jahwista, followed a more traditional and strictly doctrinal approach. Villa not only sought out the same literary patrimony that imbued the Hebrew Bible with greater interpretative possibilities, but was also a well-trained philologist in the same languages as the Elohist. In the seminary, and later at the Istituto Biblico in Rome, Villa was trained not only in Hebrew and Aramaic, but also in early Semitic languages and dialects, such as Ugaritic, Akkadian, Sumerian, and even ancient Egyptian glyphs.

We could call Villa a modern Elohista. While most contemporary renderings of the Pentateuch stop at the Hebrew, both in their translation and notes, Villa goes further back to excavate the meaning of words under the pre-Judaic cultures. As a philologist of ancient languages, Villa merged etymology with his sensibility as a poet in search for the *verbum naturans*, the word that holds the raw signifying force to create the universe:

La ricerca sistematica dell’etimologia sacra e organica [...] è, nel complesso corpo biblico, la vertebra che lo percorre tutto, a perpendicolo e in orizzontale, in ogni tempo e in ordine al principio della creatività della parola, concezione propria dell’antico pastore arameo come del colto sacerdote di epoca ellenistica.

[The systematic search for the sacred and organic etymology [...] is, in the complex corpus of the Bible, the vertebrae that runs through it, perpendicularly and horizontally, in every time period and in line with the principle of the creativity of the word, a concept

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

that was the same for the ancient Aramaic shepherd as it was for the educated priest in the Hellenistic era.]¹⁶²

Whether he is translating Hebrew into Italian, re-weaving the various myths back into *Genesis*, or etymologizing in his notes, Villa strives to capture the raw creativity of the word as if it were being spoken again for the first time. In order to better explain how Villa reactivates this linguistic force through the etymology of individual morphemes, we may return to our analogy of the game of telephone.

Much like the biblical text, the meaning behind words has been altered greatly as it has passed through different languages, cultures, and time periods. Also, similar to how the early stories of those nomadic tribes passed from myth into history, language made the transition from its mysterious origins as a collection of sounds into codified signification. With the science of history, the meaning of a word can be revealed according to its usage at the time in which a literary text was authored. However, the deeper Villa goes in his etymological excavation of the biblical languages, the more the meaning of words become uncertain: they return to their origins and, as a result, open back up to a greater signifying potential. This is where Villa's translation sets itself apart from all the others in existence: it emphasizes the mystery behind words in order for them to thrive again, whereas other translators fill in the mystery and move on in their quest for certitudes.

After having briefly analyzed the most poignant statements in Villa's introduction to his translation of *Genesis*, I would now like to turn our attention to the text itself. I will only partially cite the work here, but the reader may find the full Italian version of this passage, along with its English translation, in the "Sampling of things to come" section of this study.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.19.

The first thing to strike us about this translation is its title: *L'Impresa del Rettile* [The Reptile's Endeavor], which is typically rendered in more canonical version as the "Fall of Man." We find the reason for such a re-titling in the accompanying note "The myth of the 'fall' of man in the historic bottlenecks of evil, of destitution, of pain, of toil, of insecurity, the myth of the end of human prestige, of the deterioration of his very nature, is a highly obscure and fantastical myth." Thus, from the outset, Villa already calls the readers attention to the incompatibility of different perspectives. On the one hand, his title emphasizes the role of the serpent in the passage over that of man, and, on the other, his note speaks of "the end of man's prestige." The translator relegates the negative implications concerning the "fall" to a note (and thus are secondary), while the serpent's action takes the forefront in his title.

When the serpent is introduced in the passage, we quickly turn to read the second note to find that the term for serpent, *nhs*, can mean any number of things: "an animal like the serpent similar to that of our taxonomic notion," "[a] celebrated cosmogonic Monster of an abyssal, marine nature," or "a real Dragon," which was taken from a Canaanite-Ugaritic myth. Villa states that the serpent did not come to embody Satan until late Judaism,¹⁶³ although a negative connotation was implied in Hebrew: "the term *nhs* also held (as it always has in Arabic, *nahisa*) the sense of "witchcraft, ill-omens." Here, Villa also draws upon more ancient sources to assign yet another possible meaning to the term: "Finally, the term *nhs* is tied to that of *nhst*, which, from the Akkadian *nahsatu*, seems to mean 'menstruation' [...]." Furthermore, in this same note, Villa almost taunts the reader by asking a question to which he knows we will never find the answer "Perché il relatore ricorre proprio al nome *nhs*?" Given that the author, or authors, of the myths remain a mystery, we will never know what they intended *nhs* to mean. By faithfully

¹⁶³ See the discussion regarding the meaning of "Satan" in the first section of this study on page 41.

representing all the different and irreconcilable meanings behind a word in his notes, Villa provides the reader with the option of choosing any path they wish regarding the meaning of the serpent. However, other meanings behind the term “serpent” and further explanation of why Villa titled the passage as he did, still await the reader, as we shall see, in the subsequent notes.

Di tutti gli animali selvaggi che Jahwè aveva fatto... Il Rettile disse alla femmina. As we move to read the body of the passage, we immediately notice that the language is in a crude, almost raw form; anything that is not supposed to be there, that could possibly embellish the text, is left out. In fact, the language is so simple that the passage is presented as if it were a fable for children. While the first line does not convey anything new with respect to other translations, the novelty of Villa’s rendering comes through in the middle of the second line as we read “femmina.” Always translated as “woman” and “man,” Villa draws a crucial distinction by instead adopting the terms “female” and “male.” These imply a state of bestiality, in that man and woman were on the level of animals; only when they open their eyes to become woman and man, do they separate themselves from beasts, for the two have acquired a faculty the animal world does not possess.

Certamente Elohim avrà detto... La Femmina rispose al Rettile. Before even eating the fruit the transformation begins, one that is brought about by a verbal exchange between the serpent and Eve. In Villa’s translation the serpent posits a notion (“Don’t eat anything from any tree”) and the female replies (“we can eat from any tree except one”). In more canonical translations in English, the conversation is rendered as “‘Even though God told you not to eat of any tree...’ The woman interrupted the serpent,”¹⁶⁴ which really isn’t a conversation at all. “Even though” implies that the serpent is luring the female into a trap and then stupidly, she falls for it.

¹⁶⁴ The Anchor Bible, *Genesis, a new translation with introduction and commentary by E.A. Speiser*, New York: Doubleday, 1962, p. 21.

The difference in Villa's version is very subtle, but extremely important: here it is almost as if the female were experiencing a small epiphany; she realizes that the meaning encoded in the serpent's message does not necessarily stand up to how things really are and, as a result, begins to also question what has been told to her by the divinity. Such a reading seems like a leap, but as we arrive at Villa's notes toward the end of the passage we will find that is not implausible.

Diventereste allora come gli elohim, conoscitori di tutto, dell'Universo. This is quite different from the usual "you will be the same as God in telling good from bad." As Villa translates it, 'knowing everything, the entire Universe,' implies a deeper and much more nuanced knowledge of things when compared to the binary of good and bad. Furthermore, Villa maintains the distinction between many gods (Elohim) and one god (Yahweh). In other words, man will become a god like all the rest, which not only suggests that man will become part of a divine pantheon, possessing similar faculties of knowledge and creation, but also that the one god overseeing the garden (or Oasis as Villa calls it) is not as infallible as he may seem. And this is yet another example of how Villa emphasizes the influence of other pantheistic myths in the actual text. While most translators call attention to the discrepancy between Elohim and Yahweh in their notes, they often fail to acknowledge its implications.

Si aprirono allora gli occhi ... e s'accorsero che loro eran nudi! As we mentioned, Villa remains faithful to the irreconcilable interpretations behind a passage or even a single word. And more often than not, his notes accumulate different ideas that in the end just don't seem to add up. For example, in note #3, he states: "the serpent did not lie, man and woman have now become *Elohim*, they know everything; so the serpent was stronger than Yahweh" (the reader will note that Villa does not say *like Elohim*, as it was written in the translation itself, but Elohim, as in, they became gods). However, if we read the final paragraph of the previous note,

it is possible that things went another way: “subdolo, ebr. ‘*rm*. S’intende, anche, insieme: ‘nudo’ [...]. Cioè, il Rettile, che è ‘*rm*, dice alla Donna che lei diventerà Elohim se mangia quel frutto. Essa ne mangia, insieme ne mangia l’uomo, e, anziché Elohim, tutt’e due diventano ‘*rm*, “nudi”.

In this same note the translator cites an older myth whose paradigm resembles that found in this biblical passage:

Elementi e mitemi tipici di questo racconto sono anche conservati, o forse perfino in parte tratti, da un comune patrimonio mitologico, che ha una redazione precipua, forse germinale, in un racconto della mitologia egiziana: secondo la quale la Donna-Maga (anche Eva è intesa come tale), che aveva nome Iside (*st*), voleva diventare una divinità. Riuscì infatti allo scopo con uno stratagemma (fece un Serpente, con la saliva del Vecchio Sole, il dio Râ) che (reinterpretato a rovescio) è analogo a quello biblico: Iside riuscì a ottenere che il Serpente mordersse il tallone o calcagno della vecchia divinità; e così Iside poté conoscere il nome, cioè l’essenza del dio; e divenne essa stessa “dea” [...].

[Elements and mythemes typical of this story are also contained in, or sometimes even taken directly from, a shared mythological patrimony, which may be in turn rooted in a tale belonging to Egyptian mythology: the Witch-Woman (with whom Eve shares certain traits), called Isis (*st*), wanted to become a goddess. She succeeded through a stratagem, which, reinterpreted backwards, is analogous to the biblical version. She made a serpent out of the saliva of the old sun god (*Râ*). Isis managed to get the snake to bite the talons or the heel of the old god; and thus Isis learned his name, that is to say his essence, and she herself became a “goddess”]

Here the serpent does the woman’s bidding: he bites the divinity and forces him to reveal his name (his essence), allowing Isis to become a god. Hebrew culture reversed this idea: the name of God is unspeakable and consequently his essence is unattainable. In this myth, however, we once again encounter the role language plays in man’s rebellion against the divine. The essence of God is the ability to create and once his name is revealed man also appropriates that same capacity. Hence we are now in the position to speak the previously unspeakable.

Cucirono subito insieme delle foglie di fico. As with “*nhs*,” Villa notes the instability behind the meaning of the term for fig: “il nome del ‘fico’, *t’nh*, appartiene a un largo e complesso calembour, o gioco etimologico-simbolico, su due radici affini, ‘*wn* and ‘*nh*, in cui un

ebreo sentiva un trascorrere di temi o significati che vanno da ‘sesso, erotismo’ a ‘sciagura, disgrazia, lutto; fatica’” [the name for fig, *t’nh*, belongs to a complex pun, or etymological-symbolic play, on two similar roots, *‘wn* and *‘nh*, in which a Hebrew heard a multitude of themes or meanings that range from “sex, eroticism” to “shame, disgrace, grief; toil]. While the discrepancy with “rettile” was noted to highlight a different interpretative option, with “fico” Villa is pointing out an addition by later belief systems that the text itself just does not support. Through his etymological study of the passage, he is able to refute an idea that has been portrayed symbolically in countless depictions regarding Adam and Eve: that the fig leaf was used to hide a sexual transgression, or that was even an immediate punishment for the sin, since when placed on the skin, the fig leaf causes a rash. As we read, the text does not mention any sexual activity whatsoever and Villa suggest that this concept is an example of how later doctrines over-reach in their exegesis, for “non si riesce a scorgere [...] fino in fondo, l’idea del testo, cioè se veramente la concezione del relatore del mito consideri la ‘caduta’ [...] come conseguenza di una trasgressione sessuale [...]” [the idea behind this passage cannot be fully deciphered, that is if the narrator’s concept of the myth actually considers the “fall,” the consequence of a sexual transgression].

Il rettile mi ha convinto. Canonical translations in English typically render this passage as “the serpent tricked me,”¹⁶⁵ which conforms to the notion of the serpent as a representative of evil that lures man away from good. “Tricked” is consistent with the implications found in the opening lines of the passage, which imply the serpent lays out a trap for the woman; translated as such, both these lines steer the text in the direction of viewing the expulsion as the result of man’s stupidity. “Convinced,” on the other hand, remains consonant with Villa’s presentation of

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, (Anchor Bible), p. 22.

the female and reptile engaging in a conversation that results in a linguistic epiphany.

Furthermore, unlike “tricked,” “convinced” implies a capacity to reason through the reptile’s statement and to decide for one’s self, not to mention that it also suggests the reptile was more convincing than Yahweh.

[...] *maledetto tu*. As the narration suddenly shifts from prose to poetry,¹⁶⁶ Villa points out certain syntactical complications that allow this line to be read in two different ways:

la sintassi non aiuta a comprendere bene il senso di questa maledizione. Si può anche letteralmente intendere: “maledetto tu... più di tutti gli animali selvaggi”. O forse meglio: “maledetto tu... da tutti gli animali selvaggi”, cioè “tutti gli animali selvaggi ti maledicano” (concezione del bestiario mitologico e favolistico).

[here the syntax is too convoluted to permit a clear interpretation of this curse. It could literally be read as: “cursed are you... more than any other wild animal.” Or better still: “cursed are you by all wild animals,” that is “may all wild animals curse you” (a concept from the fabled and mythological bestiary).]

This serves as an example of how Villa respects the lacunae in the text. Rather than filling in the gaps, he simply highlights them and leaves his reader with options in reconstructing the syntax and subsequently drawing interpretation from it. At this point, it is no surprise that Villa loved to indulge in linguistic games, and we should repeat that by giving his readers syntactical options he is playing a game similar to the “Choose your own adventure novels” written for children. In these texts, the reader may select a path to follow and, as a result, may influence the outcome of the narrative according to the series of choices they make. No one would ever think such a thing could also be carried out within the Bible, but Villa, through his philological rigor, demonstrates how its language also engages in such ludic games.

Egli (?)...schiaccerà...conoscerai. Like the lacunae, Villa respects the enigma, for as we mentioned earlier, it allows signification to continue. As we read in note #6:

¹⁶⁶ Both Villa’s translation and more canonical renderings, such as the Anchor Bible, present the divinity’s reprimand in the form of verse. However, the reasons behind such a shift are unclear.

la frase è enigmatica, e il verbo *swp* non è comprensibile in ebraico. Qui riteniamo i due *swp* prestati dall'akk. *sapu* "schiacciare con i piedi, calpestare" e akk. *sapû* "guardare, vedere". Antichi e moderni traducono in vari modi; più o meno alla ventura. Dobbiamo considerare il testo come perduto, fino a che analogie testuali, o nuove comparazioni letterarie nell'ambito dell'antico oriente, possano offrire mezzi più sicuri che ci aprano il testo.

[the phrase is enigmatic and the verb *swp* is not understandable in Hebrew. Here we maintain that the two *swp* have been borrowed from the Akkadian *sapu*, "to smash with one's feet, or to trample" as well as from the Akkadian *sapû*, "to look and to see." Both ancient and modern scholars have translated this in various ways; and more or less haphazardly. Thus we are at a loss. A reliable interpretation of the passage cannot be made until new documents surface from the Ancient East, allowing us to clarify it through textual comparisons.]

Since the meaning of *Swp* is unknown, we encounter one of those instances in which a word presents itself as a *vox*, as merely sound with an intention to signify. Therefore, the translator must rely on its phonetic affinity to other terms in order to venture a meaning. Villa, however, tells us that these are merely approximations and that many translators render this passage haphazardly. Whether or not the meanings between the Hebrew *swp* and the Akkadian *sapu* are similar cannot be confirmed until other texts are unearthed.

Furthermore, as we return to the text, we find that there is an inexplicable shift in the subject of the divinity's castigation of Adam and Eve. Rather than furnishing a note, Villa calls our attention to the enigma by inserting a question mark in the line itself. Before it would seem God is directing his anger at the serpent, but with the switch to the third person subject pronoun "egli" [he] we do not know if the divinity is now speaking about Adam or if he speaking to Adam and Eve about the serpent; all which renders any interpretation of the line highly unstable. In the Anchor Bible, the lines are unmistakably directed at the serpent and unfold without even the slightest hint at any discrepancy in the subject: "I will plant enmity between you and the

woman, / and between your offspring and hers [...]”¹⁶⁷,” which not only provides readers with a false sense of certitude, but also does them a disservice.

Eva. With his etymological study of one word, the name Eve, in note # 8, Villa manages to undermine millennia of interpretations, allowing the reader to see this episode in an entirely new light.

“Eva”: ebr. *hwh*, continua il mito onomastico, basato sul complesso sistema di sincretismi etimologici. Nel nome Eva, che si può ritenere mutuato a testi mitologici sumeri, è contenuto il sumero AWA (AMA), “madre, femmina”, su cui l’influsso etimologico semitico avrà sentito *hwj* “serpente” (da cfr. aram. *haiwa* e sopra tutto arab. *hayya* “serpente”), e, insieme, la voce arcaica *hwh* “vita”.

[“Eve”: *hwh* in Hebrew, is a continuation of the onomastic myth, based on the complex system of etymological syncretisms. In the name Eve, which we can consider to be borrowed from Sumerian mythological texts, is contained the Sumerian AWA (AMA), “mother, female,” in which the Semitic ear would have heard *hwj*, “snake,” (see the Aramaic *haiwa* and most of all the Arabic *hayya*, “snake), as well as the archaic word *hwh*, “life.”]

We can read this marvelous finding in two ways: Eve herself is the serpent or the serpent is Eve’s alter ego. Either way, Villa’s discovery completely destabilizes the text and allows the reader to go back to the beginning and re-examine the episode in a completely different manner. Most importantly, we now better understand why Villa titled his translation as he did. *The Reptile’s endeavor* is Eve’s endeavor; it is not a fall but an undertaking similar to those found in the various myths Villa cites, in which the rebellions are carried out for man’s benefit. In transgressing the word of god, man separates himself from animal, creates his own language, and through that language, he shapes the world. Thus, through Villa’s translation, we may view this episode of *Genesis* as the first example in which man begins his own linguistic genesis.

In composing his own verse, Villa carries out the same search for the *verbum naturans* as he did in translating the Hebrew Bible. In other words, his poetry aims to create the same signifying power of a linguistic genesis, setting in motion a number of interpretative possibilities.

¹⁶⁷ The Anchor Bible, *Genesis*, etc., p. 22.

In fact, many of the linguistic elements he highlights in his rendering of the Pentateuch can also be traced throughout his poetry: Villa capitalizes on the tension indicative of the myth, the enigma's capability of proliferating meaning without ever exhausting it, the lacunae or syntactical gaps, the ludic games that allow the reader to choose a thread of discourse, the absence of the author, the inexplicable shift in subject, the fragmentation of texts, the incompatibility of perspectives, the phonetic approximations between words, and most of all the returning of words to their mysterious origins. As we read Villa's poetry, all these factors coalesce to create a sense that we are engaging some sort of long lost, ancient manuscript. While the poet generates the text, much like a philologist, the reader must learn how to live with this precariousness and keep in mind that the meaning of Villa's texts is as uncertain as it is in his translation of the Bible: just as one believes to have grasped a meaning, it quickly vanishes to make room for yet another.

That being the case, we will focus on how Villa constructs meaning and not the meaning itself. Over the next few pages I would like to simply highlight some examples that will serve to better equip readers as they engage Villa's poetry and to help them appreciate the process behind its creation.

Prior to delving into our linguistic analysis, I would like to briefly cite a few examples of how Villa's biblical studies come through in his verse. The poet references the Bible throughout his oeuvre, however, there are instances in which his poems act as its palimpsest, either elaborating on certain passages of the Bible or rewriting them completely. For example, in the collection *Oramai*, the poem *Semper pauperes* expands on a line taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew and *Natus de muliere* is a play on Job 14:1. Furthermore, on several occasions, Villa makes allusions to the "original sin" in *Genesis* as being a gift. For example, in *Per miracolo*,

found in the same collection, he writes “fu il peccato/ a renderci immortali, fu il peccato! Che egoisti, / poi” [it was the sin that made us immortal, it was the sin! / How selfish of us]. In the long poem *Si, lentamente*, Villa refers to “il prossimo imminente già vicino altro peccato originale” [the next imminent already close other original sin], which implies a repetition of the original act of transgressing language to bring about something new.

In shifting our analysis to Villa’s language, we will start by noting how the presence of the author begins to diminish from the collection of *Adolescenza* onward. In fact, as we already said in second section of this study, the poet, in an article he wrote in 1937 for the journal *il Frontespizio*, openly declares his opinion concerning the role of the “I”: “Siamo del parere che la poesia non possa interessarsi ai documenti biografici, alle vicende, interne o esterne, di un uomo...” [We are of the opinion that poetry cannot interest itself in biographical documents, in the events, either internal or external, of man...].¹⁶⁸ The poet sought to remove himself from his texts in order to open up its language to a wider range of signifying possibilities, for he knew that an author’s biography can lead his readers to interpret his work according to personal events. Villa, instead, removes himself from his poetry to mirror how the authors were absent from ancient texts, leaving readers to decipher his poetic enigmas for themselves. His position resembles that of Wallace Stevens’ in *The Creation of Sound*:

If the poetry of X was music,
So that it came to him of its own,
Without understanding, out of the wall

Or in the ceiling, in sounds not chosen,
Or chosen quickly, in a freedom
That was their element, we should not know

That X is an obstruction, a man
Too exactly himself, and that there are words

¹⁶⁸ E. Villa, “Sopra il ritorno del canto,” in *il Frontespizio*, n.6, giugno 1937- XV, p. 458.

Better without an author, without a poet,

[...] ¹⁶⁹

Both Villa and Stevens felt the language of poetry had a life of its own and was better off without an author.

Not only is the authorial “I” absent from Villa’s texts, but the subjects of his verse are often buried among a syntactical fragmentation. His poems often start out of nowhere and the reader is thrown *in medias res*, in the middle of a conversation that was started elsewhere, quite possibly in a different language. See, for example, the beginning of *Comizio 1953*: “and going further down down down to the scrawny time of dusty christians [...].” The first part of the poem, the one that contains whatever happened before that “and” is missing entirely. Until the first part is found, the reader will always be haunted by what is missing.

For another example, we turn to *Pezzo 1941*, which opens with a hypothetical introductory clause that is not followed by a consecutive chain, but rather a series of conditions:

Potrebbe darsi
che l’aria un giorno
qualunque, viaggiasse
per l’aria a malincuore,

e ma se il lago di Garda non recupera col tempo
tutta la polvere mangiata dai ciclisti in gare assurde,
i chilometri che non contano, fatti per niente,

e ma fin quando [...]

[It could be
that on any given
day air would travel
half-heartedly through the air,

maybe, but if Lake Garda fails to recover in time
all the dust eaten by cyclists in meaningless races,
and kilometers that don’t count, good for nothing,

maybe, as long as ...]

¹⁶⁹ W. Stevens, *The Creation of Sounds*, in *Collected Poems*, New York: Knopf, 1954.

Complicating the structure is a series of subordinating conjunctions like *if, as long as, as if, and therefore*. Consequently, the entire poem changes in meaning depending on how the reader decides to reconstruct the syntax.

At times, certain poems can create a temporal confusion at their opening, as in *E ma dopo*:

Dopo il dopo è dopo
dopo cenato la tempesta
dopo agonizzato l'eliotropo e chini
in giù gli stami [...]

[After the after is after
after dinner the storm
after agony the heliotrope and bending
the stamens...]

Here, the typical unfolding of cause and effect is jumbled, and the reader does not know what came first and what came after. And we find a similar phenomenon in *Astronomia*. If in the previous examples the various possibilities were implicit, here Villa marks them with much more clarity:

bene si crede che nello spazio
specchio lento delle rute si disfogli
spirito

la fluorescente odissea dei gradi e le natanti e mute
vertebre plenilunie declinate alla fronte delle proiezioni contrarie!
udito allora riverberare il suono nello screpolo universo
della ionosfera?

good it is to believe that in the [space
slow mirror of rues defoliates
spirit

the fluorescent odyssey of degrees and the floating
and mute full-moon vertebrae inflected at the front of contrary projections!
then did you heard the sound reverberate in the cracked universe
of the ionosphere?]

The various threads are presented for the reader to choose, like in the adventure novels for children. The verse *good it is to believe* gives rise to three different options: *space, slow mirror,*

spirit. Furthermore, with the use of the prolepsis that places the verb *defoliate* at the end of the verse, it is difficult to understand if one of these three things defoliates, or if it is something that is named in the following stanza.

At times Villa's texts resemble the enigmatic responses of an ancient sibyl. Prior to departing for war, soldiers would ask her if they would make it back alive. Her response was inevitably "Ibis redibis non morieris in bello" and the answer to her enigma all depended on where the soldier placed a comma. In Villa's poems fragmentation can also come in the form of a sentence that carries on almost indefinitely without any punctuation to help put the piece back in proper order (or, at times, periods are placed whether they typically should not be). See, for example, the long poem *Sì, ma lentamente*, in which sentences seem to go forever as they unfold through syntactical twists and turns before ever coming to a period:

[...] now it happened
that the fleas multiplying like the firmament's
fiery stars quartered pressing the transatlantic liner,
and finally happened that from on high god
cursed the fleas and noah and the innocent, and okay,
little children and pudenda and everyone, and so it be, transeat."
we wait, patience will come, let's get to the thing:
it will come when in the evening in the little town
where the incandescent clouds of dried meals cross off shore
and the shouts of barn dances or halls, in a winy
prose, when spring tenderly milling between false notes
and musically will spread across the colored hemisphere,
in great handfuls the grasshoppers and grain and fountains
of the universal grain and the cornel tree, and venus
supreme venus and a inimitable light of iridium
(it will have hair
that has the color
that has the wheat
and like the color
that like the firmament
that are her eyes,
or promise, yes,
i'll marry her.

In a poem that is nearly twelve pages long, the number of periods can be counted on both hands. Villa also acts like the sibyl by tearing his work to shreds and casting it to the wind. For example, *Poesia è* was composed on ten individual pieces of paper. The original order of the stanzas is unknown for these folios were left jumbled in a box. Therefore, they can be shuffled together in a number of different ways, causing the signification to change with every new mixing. The poet achieves this same sense of fragmentation within the individual pages itself, at times elaborating on Stéphane Mallarmé's theories regarding the text as a cosmic architecture. In some cases, Villa causes a big-bang to happen across the space of the page, where words and sounds float aimlessly as if they were awaiting structure.

Villa also emphasizes fragmentation by inserting blank spaces on the page, which he positions at strategic points within the text, as if they were linguistic traps. Often, sentences, periods, and entire discourses disappear within these gaps, rendering interpretation even more uncertain, which is reminiscent of translating an ancient manuscript riddled with lacunae. For example, in *Linguistica* the discourse is continuously interrupted, before it ever reaches a logical conclusion, by periods and then blank spaces.

There's no more origins. Nor. Nor does one know if.
If they were origins and not even.
 And not even a reason why origins
 are born Nor any longer
 faith, idol of Amorgos!

It is as if these verses gravitated dangerously around the gaps on the page, vanished within them, and then reemerged to start over anew on the other side of them.

If here the spaces and periods serve to momentarily interrupt the discourse and send it in different directions, at other times these small abysses devour it completely, as in *17 variazioni*:

[...]
seed was the wind.
the voice a process of hydrogenations.

not eliminated, the extreme
seasons were language.

scents were frost and night,
and weather that, was such that.
the soul distance through equality,
and the number folly the purest folly.
[...]

Our investigation will now move from Villa's fragmented syntax to look at the individual phonemes and morphemes within his verse. Many of the examples we will cite may also be found in the footnotes at the end of the translations included later in this volume. Here we are simply categorizing these examples in order to show how the poet employs similar techniques throughout his oeuvre, no matter the collection or the language he adopts. These categories included: corruptions, etymological games, *voces*, glossolalia, word-strings, portmanteau, neo-formations, amalgamations, neologisms, and finally the litany. Furthermore, since the different linguistic devices Villa utilizes tend to resist rigid categories, we should note that ours are in no way set in stone; certain examples may pertain to more than one category.

Villa often corrupts words by modifying their spellings ever so slightly. As the critic Cecilia Bello-Minciachi states in her article on Villa's Latin, *Hupokritam vocem*, the reader often encounters "fenomeni di ipercaratterizzazione latina o greca dati dall'uso di 'h' o di 'y' non etimologiche o da concrezioni verbali tendenti ad un magnificazione o distorsione archeo/etimologico..." [phenomenon of Latin of Greek hyper-characterization given the use of "h" or "y" that are not etymological or verbal concretions that tend toward a magnification or archeo-etymological distortion]. Although her analysis is aimed at the recurrence of this phenomenon in Villa's Latin we may also apply her findings to the poet's use of other languages. For example, the hyper-characterization takes place when Villa replaces the 'i' in *Italia* with a 'y.' This substitution not only causes the noun to seem foreign, but also points to how languages

evolve down different paths. For example, while the Greek *epsilon* does not remain in Italian, it does in other foreign tongues like English. While graphically the word *Italya* appears different, its pronunciation does not change, as it does ever so slightly with the poet's corruption "Itaglia." We find this same game in Villa's different spelling of the Italian "sibilla" as either *sybilla* or *sibylla* in his series of poems entitled *Sibyllae*. At times, in a word, Villa includes an 'h' where it should not be, as in "eucharistico" in *Comizio 1953*. This letter is also foreign to the Italian alphabet and when inserted into *eucaristico*, the "ch" resembles the Greek "x." Thus, the poet brings out the "xristo" in "eucharistico."

The poet also corrupts by causing a swerve in the evolution of a word. In other words, he shows how the formation of a word could have gone another way, either phonetically or graphically. For example, Villa re-writes adjectives by swapping their endings, as in *Argomenti* with "italiarde, tosche, lombane" (italiane, toscane, lombarde) or changes the beginning of nouns, as in *Comizio 1953* where the poet switches "agonia" to "ingonia." In the same poem, he plays on the engendering of the Italian language, creating either linguistic hermaphrodites by using the adjective for masculine in its feminine form "masculina" and feminine in its masculine form "femmino," or transforming feminine words into masculine (and vice versa), as in *poiiana* to *poiano*.

The author also calls the reader's attention to the etymology of a word by rewriting it according to more ancient phonetics. For example, in *Comizio 1953*, we find "eideia," which demonstrates how the word for "idea" is a derivative of the Greek verb εἶδω, meaning "to see." Villa also explicitly tells his readers that the meaning of his words following these ancient etymologies, as in the poem *Artemis* from the collection *Verboracula*, "leges sumerice" (you will read in Sumerian), or in *17 variazioni*, "eu te dic en son latin" (I'll tell you in Latin sound).

These benchmarks serve an important purpose in Villa's poetry for they inform the reader when he is playing on the meaning of more ancient terms or on their phonetic value. The reader may also find that a similar game is taking place in reverse, as the poet uses modern languages to re-write Greek and Latin terms, treating them as if they were still spoken today.

On occasion, he breaks up words throughout a poem in order to bring out their etymological affinities. For example, in *Però prima del vento*:

[...]
i verbi coniugati a malapena, e i gemi-
ti, e imprese, e faccende e càno-
ni, il bene della vita,

sono i semi riscaldati tra le dita
di una sola mano, di una lingua
sciolta, di una lingua nuova;

e le radici semplici o gemi-
nate, nel nuvolo sommerso
dei parlari, [...]

By parsing “gemitì” (moans) and “geminatè” (geminates) the poet simultaneously emphasizes the similar root of two these two terms and their completely different meaning, which begs the question as to what *moans* have to do with *geminates*? Furthermore, *gemi-* rhymes with *semi*, suggesting that a word part functions as a seed that eventually grows and branches into other words like *gemi-* into *gemitì* and *geminatè*.

We find that throughout his oeuvre this breaking of words to form new combinations and associations becomes increasingly more drastic. See, for example, the ending of *hyménée liturg* in the collection *Heurarium*, where the poem suddenly scatters into different pieces that may be recombined in various ways. While here the poem moves from a more linear verse into this splintering, further along in his career, Villa creates entire poems based solely on the parsing of words: for an example, see *Pythica* in the collection *Verboracula*.

While these techniques focus on the fragmentation of morphemes, the poet also creates words of pure sound to which any signification has yet to be applied, for which we have borrowed the term *vox* from Giorgio Agamben.¹⁷⁰ The first true example of this phenomenon can be found in the poem *ultimatum à la corrrrée* in which Villa plays with the sound of the first letter of the alphabet:

last AA
 AA. AAA. A.AA
 AAAAAA A A A
 AAAAAA A.AA.
 A. AAA.AA.A.A.
 AAAAAA A A A
 AAAAA A t u m
 tu tu tu tu tu tum

The repetition of “Alpha” suggest a series of small beginnings that occur through different amalgamations of the same sound, as if this one letter holds infinite possibilities in and of itself, even before it is folded in with other letters.

Examples of *voces* in the form of entire words, instead, may be found in the Italian of *Comizio 1953*, such as “photohiscente” or in *Letania per Carmelo Bene*, such as “cinerule.” And in Villa’s poem in English, *Brunt H*: “hyle,” “unds,” “mollow,” “wers,” “incolumity,” “Transaptomathic,” and the list goes on. Similar *voces* may be found in any of the languages the poet employs in his verse. See for example, his Portuguese and French in *Heurarium* or his Latin in *17 variazioni* and *Verboracula*. Although these *voces* are somewhat reminiscent of the language they are couched in, Villa created his own mysterious terms when renaming his poems later in life. The new titles include, among others: XEIS, SHIVS, ESSMO, CASSEOHS, ΣΟΣ, ABKUM, and KOCHS. These are enigmatic words that seem to come from some long lost language and are completely indecipherable.

¹⁷⁰ For his definition of the *vox*, *voces*, *glossolalia*, and *xenoglosse* return to pages 64-68.

When these individual *voces* come together, they form a *glossolalia*; a poem composed mostly of sound with little meaning. See, for example, the piece aptly entitled *Genesis*:

kart			kars	
		ker		
	crin		krus	
		kres		
			kruk	
		christ		cru
christ			cresc	
	cerast			cereal
			cru	
				crux
ruX	aerug	rug	ros	reg
	krugs	krag		
			crus	crura

It is as if we were witnessing the birth of a language and its subsequent morphology. The poet begins with the word “kart,” a word of pure sound whose meaning is allusive. Then he reconstructs its hypothetical transmission (and manipulation) across the ages, until it comes to form more recognizable terms in different languages (such as “christ,” “cereal,” or “crus,” which is Latin for “leg”). This entire galaxy of words precariously rests on a random agglutination of sounds that seem to derive from some mythical age.

At times, the poet constructs nominal strings in which words of different meanings are grouped together for purely phonetic reasons. Consequently, the barriers separating these different significations are weakened under the pressure of the signifiers. For example, see how the poem *Luogo e impulso* is composed completely of nouns that are joined phonetically by a sequence of alternating rhymes:

Metà idea e metà frutto
 metà rischio metà fame
 metà intero metà tutto
 metà morte metà pane

Metà effigie e metà spazio
 metà corpo e metà ombra

metà morbo metà strazio
metà asciutto metà fiume

[...]

The result is that the typical meaning of these words is emptied and that the application of new meaning must be teased out through the phonetic similarities between them.

The poet also has a tendency to assign words a function they previously did not possess, by either transforming nouns into verbs, verbs into nouns, and nouns into adjectives. For verbs into nouns, see the opening line of *Semper Pauperes* in which uses “Breda,” the name of a manufacturing plant outside Milan, as a verb: “Già da lontano breda, già da tempo, con l’indice levato.” Although it is common in Italian to use the infinitive form of verbs as a noun (i.e. il dire = the act of saying), the poet utilizes conjugated verbs as nouns. For example, see the *Letania per Carmelo Bene*, where we read “il vedodire,” which literally translates to “the Iseesaying.” A more common occurrence is the transformation of nouns into adjectives that do not exist, of which we list two here: the English “brained petals” (suggesting petals have brains?) and the Italian “vulvatico.” While the adjectival form of “vulva” does not exist in Italian, in English we do have “vulval” or “vulvar.” However, these refer to a shape that is similar to a vulva, while “vulvatico” (vulvatic) almost suggests a vulva-like function. Also, this neologism rings of the Italian “viatico” (viaticum), bringing a rather blasphemous connotation to the priest’s administration of the last rites.

In his work the poet also creates a number of neologisms, which we could also refer to as neo-formations or amalgamations, by combining different words to form a linguistic synergy. In *Imprimatur* we find “ombelisco” a combination of “ombelico” (navel) and “obelisco” (obelisk). In *Contenuto figurativo*, the poet writes “equibollente,” a merging of the “equipollente” (equivalent) and the verb “bollire” (to boil). A few verses later, we read “ambigualente” which is

part “ambiguo” (ambiguous), part “ambivalente” (ambivalente). In *Comizio 1953*, Villa joins “speleologia” (the exploration of caves) with the Greek *phonos* to create “speleofonica.” In the same poem, “permansivo” and “idolologico”: the first is a combination of either the verb “permanere” (to linger on, remain, or continue) or the adjective “permanente” (permanent) and the adjective espansivo” (expansive). In the second, Villa replaces the “idea” in “ideologia” with “idolo” (idol), which in *Letania per Carmelo bene* is written again as “eidealologia.”

However, one of the most amusing examples of such neo-formations comes again from *Imprimatur*: “Occhitesticoli” may indicate a combination of the intellect (the eyes are the most intellectual of the senses, according to Plato) and the visceral; or it could be a reference to the bogus legend regarding the female pope Giovanna and the subsequent procedure carried out by the conclave to assure themselves, by examining the genitals, that the Vicar of Christ was not a woman. Or it could even be a corruption of English, that is “eyeballs” become “eyetesticles” and then the poet translated it into Italian.

At times, Villa separates words to show how they are already a synergy of different meanings. In *Comizio 1953*, we find “od rosa,” where Villa removes a letter to emphasize the “rose” in the Italian for “odorous.” The same applies to “inane llato” (bejeweled) further down in the same poem, in which Villa highlights the “inane.”¹⁷¹ Here we also read the parsing of “giacul atoria,” which in Italian is comprised of “already,” “ass,” and the ending “-atoria.” Also in *Comizio*, the poet creates a neologism by simply removing a letter: taking a “n” out of the verb “depenare” transforms the action of crossing out into that of either removing the penis (pene) or the pain (pena). Rather than parsing a word, Villa often inserts parenthesis to show how two

¹⁷¹ We should note that one is never completely sure when making such assumptions given the rather sloppy nature of Villa’s editions. Typos are very likely to have occurred and, in fact, the poet probably welcomed them.

indramatica	faux olim
	eructans ab ovo
indroguaina	endroguaina
indogunanta	androngyna

While in the previous two examples sound leads to the creation of new *voces*, here Villa simultaneously generates new words and accumulates those already in existence by playing on their phonetic value.

To conclude our discussion on the various ways in which Villa brings about a linguistic genesis (which is merely an introductory taste to the many techniques he employs), I would like to briefly touch on the litany. With this technique, the poet utilizes repetition throughout a poem in order to simultaneously accumulate and empty the meaning of either a single word or an entire phrase. His adoption of the litany as a poetic technique was most likely born out of his experience in the seminary. Within church services or processions the litany is a series of petitions: the clergy recites a number of different statements to which the parishioners respond with a refrain. For example, as the priest lists a number of prayers (such as, for the healing of the sick), the people reply with a *kyrie eleison*: “lord have mercy” or “Grant us, o lord.” In his poems, Villa transforms this petitioning of the divine into a supplication of meaning, which, much like the answer to prayers, never comes, but continues on indefinitely.

The litany also comes from the poet’s experience in translating the Hebrew Bible, for which we return once again to his introduction: “Il nome di Jahwè ricorre nell’ Antico Testamento circa 6700 volte. La lunga litania, ineffabile e ossessiva, è la traccia della figura di questa divinità che crea i propri fantasmi e la propria favola [...]”¹⁷² Thus, we can say that in his poetry, this litany, similar to the repetition of the term Yahweh in the Old Testament, is the incessant search to discover the meaning of a term. Yet the one true meaning is always allusive,

¹⁷² E. Villa, *Sulla traduzione di testi biblici*, in “Il Verri,” etc. p. 20, note #6.

and thus the operation of generating more meanings must continue. In other words, the litany is the obsessive chase after a meaning that cannot be found and the accumulation of a number of different meanings throughout that chase. In acting as the refrain within a poem, the word, or phrase, is the point in which the poem simultaneously empties the meaning it has acquired and begins to create new meaning through whatever follows. The result is that Villa pushes a term to become everything and nothing.

We have four prime examples in which the poet relies on the litany: *Cosa c'è di nuovo in Oramai*, *Imprimatur in 3 ideologie*, the long poem *Letania per Carmelo Bene*, and *Poesia è*. In the first example, Villa employs the refrain “di nuovo c'è” at the beginning of the first four stanzas. And in the fifth stanza, we read “c'è che trema la sostanza universale” [the universal substance trembles]. The introduction of “what’s new” has a butterfly effect, in that it sets off a chain of new events that take place across the entire universe. This repetition is also reminiscent of child’s incessant use of the question “why?” when trying to discover the meaning behind things: ‘Why is the sky blue?’, ‘Because it is a reflection of the ocean?’, ‘Why does it reflect off the ocean?’ and so on, until the search for the meaning behind why things are the way they are comes to include everything around us.

The same happens with the refrain of “ibi et ubique,” which is Latin for “there and everywhere.” This suggests that the meaning of the poem is, paradoxically, both present and absent; it is there but also everywhere else. Furthermore, the last stanza of the poem finishes with an “amen,” which would suggest the end of a discourse. However, the refrain returns once again and is not followed by a period. Ending as such, the author leaves the poem open in order for its discourse to continue on another time.

The *Letania per Carmelo Bene* takes place within the very name of Carmelo Bene. Villa writes it in a number of different ways: Carmelo Bien, Carmelo Béné, C B, B C, Carmel le Bien du Béné, obviam Carmelo, carmélange, Carmen, and so on. It is as if Villa were trying to capture the essence of his contemporary poet and playwright by constantly repeating and slightly altering his name.

Similarly, the repetition of “poesia è” is an attempt to define the indefinable: “la poesia è quasi tutto: cioè è tutto, meno / quello che veramente è” [poetry is almost everything: that is everything, less/ what it really is].”

Thus far, we have shown how the translator, in his rendering of the Bible, harnesses the creative force of the *Verbum naturans* in order to erode the idea of revelation and reinstate the enigma. We have also shown how the poet uses that same creative force in his own verse in order to allow for the proliferation of meaning to continue without ever stagnating in univocality. What is left to do, however, is demonstrate how the same search for the *verbum naturans* plays out in another of Villa’s artistic pursuits: as a critic of both primordial and contemporary art, of which we have examples in our “sampling of things to come”: *Noi e la preistoria* and *Lucio Fontana*.

The idea of anti-revelation would seem most contradictory when it comes to Villa’s writings on primitive and contemporary art. Traditionally, the critic’s role is to clarify the artwork, to draw meaning from it, to provide readers with the necessary tools to approach it. Here the critic, instead, refrains from advancing any interpretation at all, and even further compounds the mystery of the work by writing a poem *about* it (in the original sense of *around* it). Thus, Villa creates a paradox that is simultaneously altruistic and self-serving: on the one hand, the artwork under analysis maintains its distance from decipherability; on the other, it

serves as a basis to create his own original piece of poetry. More specifically, by couching his “exegeses,” so to say, in a cryptic form of verse, the critic shrouds the historical circumstances of the artwork in mystery, consequently, transforming it into a myth. Thus, through this unique form of “criticism,” primitive and abstract art become one and the same.

In his essay “Noi e la preistoria,” published in *Arti Visive* in 1954, Villa traces the origins of art back to one simple gesture carried out by Neanderthal man: the displacement of a whalebone from the shore into his cave. Today, the movement of a whalebone may not seem like the most refined artistic example man has ever produced, but it was nevertheless at the time quite remarkable, for it serves as the first manifestation of an aspect fundamental to all art, in that the materiality of an object was transformed into something it wasn’t before. As he writes: “Today it’s believed that Neanderthals did not possess any sort of skill that we would call ‘artistic.’ Yet, the fact that they picked up the vertebra and brought it into their dwelling should prove that they understood the ‘singularity’ of the object.”

Here Villa makes two very important observations. The first that we moderns prefer to indulge in the deceptive tranquility that art has evolved considerably since our primitive origins. Yet, if we consider an example like the caves at Chauvet in Southern France, we find that the charcoal drawings depicting herds of animals not only display a rather skilled hand, but also that the use of space is strikingly modern: their placement on a concave section of the wall, together with the illumination of a nearby fire-pit, gave the drawings a sense of movement. All of which recalls the dynamism of our not so distant Futurism, and in particular Umberto Boccioni’s paintings, such as *La città che sale* (1910).

And the second is that the action of picking the object up off the shore and placing it on display in a cave must have been motivated by a change in Neanderthal man’s perception of that

object – that something typically taken for granted was suddenly assigned a different function and space. From here Villa begins to venture into the enigma surrounding what prompted such a displacement: “[...] what both paleontologists and historical archeologists have struggled to clarify is precisely the reason why an object, either found in nature or manufactured, came to be charged with a function that it did not acquire naturally.” And this could have happened for any number of reasons. Was the object part of a magical-religious ceremony of worship? Or was the vertebra magic in and of itself: a complex structure evoking a sense of both continuity and variation? Perhaps it served as an example of something primordial man sought to build, a chain or weave?

The fact that answers to such questions can never truly be verified and belong to a past of which we know very little, leads the critic to approach the matter in a different way: “[...] that which paleontologists have tried so hard to clarify is what causes the object to emit new relationships with spheres of activity that are external to it.” Searching for *what* our whalebone “emits” means, according to Villa, to move in the direction of interpreting its meaning and toward aesthetics. He equates delving into matters of “beauty” to casting a rather reductive light on the object. To assign it an aesthetic means to figure out what it intends to say. And in doing so, the observer pushes the object toward a specific interpretation. This, consequently, renders the object impotent, for the many ways of perceiving it are suffocated by one alone. Yet since the mythical circumstances surrounding the whalebone prohibit us from advancing any certainties, it maintains its mystery and thus its almost endless power of evocation.

With this we hone in on an aspect fundamental to Villa’s criticisms. Rather than in what the object *says*, Villa was interested in what it actually *does*: the gesture through which an object is transformed into something else, the pure and novel act of making. What matters then is not

what the Neanderthal saw in the whalebone, but rather the displacement, for it was this “[...] pure gesture that led prehistoric man to a concrete communication with the world, or rather to take possession of the world.” By simply moving the whalebone, the Neanderthal went from passively being in the world to actively taking a hold of it, of shaping it in such a way that it appeared differently (which, not by chance, resembles the paradigm of the cosmogonic myths).

And we can view this gesture as inflicting a tear upon the world, one that comes in many forms: as the shifting of an object from one place to another, as a line etched into a wall and so on. The tear is the first step in the creation of all art: the refashioning of a material so it evokes new relationships with the world (as its continuity is broken up, a diversity is revealed, and a desire to reassemble all the pieces in a new way is evoked¹⁷³). This allows us to transgress our typical perceptions: once the materiality of the object is altered, it unhinges the way we look at it, acting as a gateway through which the things we take for granted appropriate characteristics that had previously been kept hidden. Or, as critics Riccardo Panattoni and Gianluca Solla observe in their “Emilio Villa o lo squarcio dell’impersonale”, new horizons are opened: “A horizon is in fact a gash, an open laceration. Therefore horizons are opened only at the cost of opening wounds.”¹⁷⁴ And it is this same initial act of tearing carried out by Neanderthal man that Villa saw in the abstract art of the 20th century: “To superficial people who object that non-figurative art is forty years old, we object that it is instead fifty thousand years old.”

We may consider two examples of modern abstract art: Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* executes a displacement similar to our whalebone and any one of Lucio Fontana’s *Cuts*, which

¹⁷³ For more on this issue, see C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (1962), Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1966.

¹⁷⁴ R. Panattoni and G. Sola, “Emilio Villa o lo squarcio dell’impersonale,” in E. Villa, *poeta e scrittore*, etc., p. 396.

literally exhibits all the qualities of the aforementioned tear. The artist inflicts a wound on the canvas, exposing what is hidden behind it. By explicitly emphasizing the gesture – the act through which the world is re-made – the abstract art of the 20th century easily lends itself to the critic’s comparison with the art of primordial man.

Villa follows one of the opinions expressed in the *Manifesto tecnico dei pittori futuristi*: “Consider art critics useless and damaging.”¹⁷⁵ In his writings, he uses the myth to connect primordial and modern art, and, in the case of the latter, to thwart any reductive critical interpretations. To do so, he must salvage the work from its historical setting and surround it in the same enigmatic, mythical circumstances as those in which primordial man operated. And this is where Villa’s poetry comes in: his style of verse makes it appear as though he were talking about some ancient object with unexplainable properties.



From Fontana’s series entitled “Buchi” [Holes].

¹⁷⁵ U. Boccioni, C.D. Carrà, G. Balla, G. Severnini, L. Russolo, *Manifesto tecnico dei pittori futuristi*, 1910. Available online at www.futurismo.altervista.org

If we look at his writings on Fontana's *Buchi*, we find that Villa employs the same techniques he does in his own verse. In the first part of his exegesis on the TROU – meaning “hole” in French – he switches linguistic codes right away, moving from Latin to French. In the same way, the poet also relies on English, as in *complexities of Survival*, *à manger les trous* or the amusing *trou I, trou you*. Used over a hundred times in different forms, the one phoneme TROU constitutes the entire essay, which points to the litany and its obsessive repetition of a term. We find series of nonsensical rhymes, such as, *boutrou foutrou toutrou troutrou* or strings of portmanteau words, such as *tatrouage*, *troudre*, *troumatique*, or *trul* (a combination of *trou* and *nul*). At times, Villa uses the alliteration of T-R to connect distant signifiers, as in *trou tué pour tuer, bien, (tuer la mort)*. Villa also creates interesting neologisms by clashing different words, defining Fontana's work as a *trouviol*, *troucarie*, or *troupassage*, which calls our attention to the gateway opened by the tear. Looking at the syntax, we find the insertion of blank spaces not only between different words, but also dividing single words themselves. As we quickly skim the “essay,” we see how the syntax almost expands and contracts, opening into prose and then condensing into verse, making the discourse difficult to follow in any sequential manner. Finally, toward the end of the piece, Villa asks the same question for Fontana's *Buchi* as he does for the Neanderthal's whalebone, which roughly translates as: “What could this mean? I don't believe it means anything, precisely; nothing, and, in every case, his work doesn't say anything but nothing, good; his work only relates.” If Villa is not interested in the signification of Fontana's work, then his criticisms of it must too refrain from signifying. The scope, instead, as we read in the postscript to the piece, is to produce *une niche niche / dans une niche / c'est une viole née /à chymere obligee*. For the artwork to continue to signify without making statements,

it must be shrouded in a mythical quality, that “black veil of the obligatory chimera” that keeps the enigma from being deciphered.

In conclusion, this *niche dans une niche* allows us to pivot and turn our attention to the other side of the paradox we mentioned earlier: we have seen how Villa’s criticism avoids supplying the artwork with any univocal interpretation. Yet we still need to answer the second question we posed earlier: how does Villa appropriate it in order to create his own original piece of poetry? Similar to how abstract art recovers the initial act of altering the materiality of the world, Villa plays on the earliest etymologies associated with writing verse. In fact, if we look in the dictionary we find that the two acts are surprisingly similar. The term poetry comes from the Greek *póiesis*, which in turn derives from the Greek verb *poiên*, meaning “to make.” At its origins, then, poetry simply referred to any form of making, and not necessarily to an act of saying. Later, in Latin, the term *versus* derives from the verb *vértete*, meaning to furrow a field.¹⁷⁶ To furrow is to reshape the psychical make-up of the land, to open a wound in the earth, one that allows for aeration and the planting of new crops. In writing verse the poet furrows the page, modifies its landscape, aerates language, and plants the seed for new possibilities.

Villa’s own poetry adheres to this original notion of “making” rather than “saying” and the same tear upon the materiality of the art-object is carried out upon the materiality of language: portmanteau words, code shifting, blank spaces, jumbled syntax, etc. all attest to the poet’s reshaping of man’s natural gift of speech; as we saw the single phoneme TROU becomes an inexhaustible source of wordplay. Like Fontana’s *Buchi*, Villa riddles the page with his TROU. Thus, Villa’s poetic criticism of abstract art is *une niche dans une niche*, a tear on top of a tear, or rather “trou I, trou you.”

¹⁷⁶ Curiously, *vertete* shares the same etymology as *vertebra*, and Villa, in the introduction to his translation of *Genesis* refers to the *verbum naturans* as the “vertebra” running through the text.

Selected Poetry of Emilio Villa: Originals and Translations

Da Adolescenza / From Adolescence

Poesia mia

Nasci dagli argini
Del monte,
Vieni da aperti
Cancelli d'ombre,
Vergine aria nata
In margini
Di carne.
Se questa svagata
Cenere di cose
Agiti ancora,
Vergine fiato
Il fuoco che accendesti eterno,
E che rivive,
Voci sincere e calde ti ritrova.

E questi che si scrivono improvvisi
Vagiti bambini d'altri mondi
Son eterni.

My Poetry

You're born from the levies
Of the mountain,
You come from open
Gates of shades,
Virgin air created
In margins
Of flesh.
If you disturb
This distracted
Ash of things once more,
Virgin breath
The eternal fire you lit,
And that lives again,
Will find you warm sincere voices again.

And these suddenly written
Babbling children of other worlds
Are eternal.

Parole silenziose

Sono incantate finestre, sul fondale
Del mio cielo dischiuse
Le parole:
Disumanate e mie.

Quando sono stanco di morire
In questa buia stanza
Prode mi dischiarano
Remote e liscie.

Chè in bocca de l'eternità
S'è accesa la parola del mio tempo,
E lieto sul fondo degli anni,
Come nella melma del naviglio
Acqua m'adagio; e passo.

Silent Words

They're spellbound windows,
Before my sky
Words ajar:
Dehumanized and mine.

When I'm tired of dying
In this dark room
I'm made clearer
By smooth and distant shores.

For in the mouth of eternity
Ignites the word of my time,
Happy at the bottom of years,
As in the naviglio's¹ sludge
Water, I lie down, and pass.

¹ The *navigli* are waterways that run through Milan. A few are still in use today.

Specchio di pini sul lago

Greve coro di culmini,
Alto gorgoglio d'acque,
Ogni voce un'ombra

Riagita nei gorgi.

Lago, specchio di sorgive, anch'io
Cresco nel buio:
Vicino a le stelle con voi
Sono fiorito e solo.

Anime rievoco dal cavo
Delle onde, che presso il groviglio dei miei rami,
Nido d'echi distese, aduno
A sillabare il tempo.

Le stelle m'ingemmano le rame,
Mi vestono le foglie di silenzi,
Mi muoiono le anime qui in mano.
Sbiadite come foglie astrali.

Sono fiorito e solo. Sacerdote
Del tempo eterno, che vegeta
Tra ramo e ramo,
Stella e stella,
Onda e onda.

Pines' Mirror on the Lake

Heavy chorus of peaks
High gurgle of waters,
Every voice a shade
Re-churned in eddies.

Lake, mirror of springs, I too
Grow in the dark:
Near the stars with you
I've blossomed and I'm alone.

I call souls back from the hollow
Of waves, which I gather next to my tangled
Branches, nest of outstretched echoes,
To parse time.

For me, the stars bejewel branches,
Cover leaves in silences,
Souls die here in hand.
Faded like astral leaves.

I've blossomed and I'm alone. Priest

Of eternal time, vegetating
Between branch and branch,
Star and star,
Wave and wave.

Voci del vento

L'onda del vento a sognare
Sua dispersa matrice,
Un mare, fiorisce.

Vento,
Viva vena del cielo,
Rinata canzone
D'un diluvio, quando
Le tue voci diventano silenzi,
E parlano, mute, nel sogno.
Odo primavera nate
Dal tuo gelido grembo,
Gioie rassegnate d'un esilio umano.

Vento,
Tre volte puro,
Come me, come
Se fossi l'ultimo uomo
Vissuto, e vissuto
Solo di carne mia e di me.

The Wind's Voices

The wave of wind blooms,
Dreaming its scattered
Matrix, a sea.

Wind,
Sky's lively vein,
A downpour's
Reborn song, when
Your voices become silence,
And, mute, speak in dream.
I hear Springs born
From your icy womb,
Resigned joys of a human exile.

Wind,
Three times pure,

Like me, as
If I were the last man
Who lived, and lived
Only of my flesh and myself.

Vita agreste

Tra noi è come quando
In cielo nascono bianchi buoi
E rosari di nuvole gonfie
Si sgranano.

Bestie del campo,
Bue, faccia di sogno,
Pecora bella,
Amici nostri,
Viviamo.

Rural life

Between us it's like when
White oxen are born in the sky
And rosaries of puffed clouds
Pass bead by bead in the hand.¹

Beasts of the field,
Ox, face of dream,
Beautiful sheep,
Friends of ours,
We live.

¹ In this poem one hears the influence of two other Italian poets: Francesco d'Assisi (given that the nature themes found here are reminiscent of his "Cantico delle creature") as well as, in my opinion, Giuseppe Ungaretti, from whose *Lindoro di deserto* (1915) Villa seems to have taken this line: "Col vento si spippola il corallo / di una sete di baci" [With the wind passes the corral / of a thirst for kisses]. In Ungaretti, the coral is the red coral from Sardinia used for rosary beads.

Alla neve

Sillabe gelate di pensieri,
Fredda sinfonia d'oltrecielo,
Neve che cade,
Son lembi d'anima mia.

O neve,
Anima pietosa, sui sentieri
Umani ci rechi, umido velo

Di candida dimenticanza:
L'oblio di cieli vissuti
Antica primavera.

To the Snow

Frozen syllables of thought,
Cold symphony beyond the sky,
Snow that falls,
Are edges of my soul.

Oh snow,
Merciful soul, you lead us
Down human paths, humid veil
Of candid forgetting:
Oblivion of lived skies
Ancient Spring.

Vita

Fosforescente velo, la mia spoglia
Mortale, ride del suo tempo
Che t'ha fatta sincera come un'acqua.

Io vivo dove mi percuote
Vortice di luci,
L'ora della vita.

Cosmici iati, lo spazio ci varca,
E varcati, ci umana,
E raccoglie nel seno dell'eternità.

Life

Phosphorescent veil, my mortal
Guise, laughs at its time
That made you sincere like a water.

I live where life's hour,
Vortex of lights,
Smites me.

Cosmic hiatus, the space crosses us,
And crossed, it makes us human,
And collects us in the bosom eternity.

Alla morte

Un gorgo di passate terre,
Voragine di cieli sfumati,
O Signore, ad ogni sera,
La morte è vicina.

Ma non ti so male,
Morte, mia madre, estrema
Aurora: quell'alito
Di consunta eternità
Mi crea.

Se mi abbandono
A te, mortale, ritorno
A vivere il tuo primo dono.

For death

A whirlpool of past terrains¹,
Deep ravine of blurred skies,
My God, every night,
Death is near.

Yet I don't know you as evil,
Death, my mother, extreme
Aurora: that breath
Of worn-out eternity
Creates me.

If, mortal, I give
Into you, I return
To live your first gift.

¹ Another reference to the same poem by Ungaretti: "Mi si travasa la vita / in un ghirigoro di nostalgie"
[My life is transplanted / in a scrawl of nostalgias.]

Paese medioevale

Un popolo di pensieri bigi e santi,
Come vecchi angeli sospesi al cielo,
Dondola su l'onde delle campane.

Le occhiaie scarne del campanile
Hanno parole strane e senza senso
Che si staccano da l'ormeggio con paure.

Paurosi gridi nascono dalle valli vuote,

Escono fiati dal silenzio dei cimiteri,
I vivi hanno le faccie dei morti.

Ma superstite senso d'uomini svaniti,
Cenere d'antichi cuori sparpagliata,
Raccolgo per l'aria una preghera mia.

Medieval Town

A people of grey saintly thoughts,
Like old angels suspended in the sky,
They sway above the ripples of bells.

The bony orbits of the tower
Bear strange words without sense
That break from the mooring with fear.

Empty valleys give birth to frightful screams,
Breaths exit from the silence of cemeteries,
The living take the faces of the dead.

But surviving sense of vanished men,
Scattered ashes of ancient hearts,
I gather my prayer across the air.

Prendi la rocca e il fuso e andiamo in California...

*... A nìvole di nebbie dei re longobardi,
si partiva per le cene, con le torce,
coi letti arrugginiti, sulle spalle,
a fare una pasqua, per i morti,
senza fine. Poi tramontava il giùbilo
di pentecoste, a picco
sopra il torrente del mio paese, o giovane Strona:
grigia, quanto la tunica dei giorni:
le donne che hanno ci hanno vigilato
han volto, a capo in giù, le sacre torce.
Solo, tre becchi di lampada, a petrolio,
ancora rischiaravano gli azìmi,
che si doveva trangugiare nelle albe
del bene (e del male), sulle strade.
Ho preso, un giorno, lo stallo
nel coro, o cicale!, dei miei simboli benedetti:
dove a scorza d'alberi, mangiati dalla folgore,
le foglie fuggite cantavano le antifone:
"Alza ferro contro il tuo petto!
perché si sappia, fin dall'inverno,
se tu sei arido o fertile: e chi
ti salverà dai gesti futuri?"
"Non mettere il tuo cuore
sulla vigna di Sirtori o di Somma,
sulla vigna d'Appiano o di Missaglia:
perché il vendemmiatore bagna il pane
dentro la secchia dell'aceto."
"Colui che implora, a ogni mattino,
la sapienza dagli àcini dell'uva,
saprà incendiar tutte le vigne
nel giorno dell'addio...".*

Grab the Distaff and Spindle and let's go to California...¹

*... In cloudy fogs of Lombard kings,
we left for the dinners, with torches,
with rusty beds, on our backs,
to have an Easter, for the dead,
without end. Then the Pentecost
rejoicing set, precipitously
over the stream of my town, oh young Strona²:
grey, as the tunic of days:
the woman who kept watch over us
turned, upside-down, the sacred torches.*

*Only, three gas lamp burners,
 still lit the unleavened bread,
 we were supposed to gobble down in the
 dawns of good (and evil), on the roads.
 I grabbed, one day, the stall
 in the choir, oh cicada!, of my blessed symbols:
 where on the bark of trees, eaten by lightening,
 the escaped leaves sang the antiphons:
 "Lift iron up to your chest!
 so we know, as early as winter,
 if you're barren or fertile: and who
 will save you from future gestures?"
 "Don't place your heart
 on the vines of Sirtori or Somma
 on the vines of Appiano or Missaglia³:
 for the picker soaks bread
 in the barrel of vinegar."
 "He who implores, every morning,
 the wisdom from grape bundles,
 will know how to burn every vine
 in the day of adieu..."*

¹ The poem's title comes from an Italian emigration song created around the early 1900s in the region of Brianza, which is close to Villa's birthplace. In the dialect of the region, the original song's refrain goes "Ciapa la rocca e 'l fus / Che andem in California, / andarem in California, / in California a stopà i bus!" [Grab the distaff and spindle / because we're going to California, / we'll go to California, / to California to fix holes].

² The city of Strona lies north-east of Milan.

³ Sirtori, Somma, Appiano, and Missaglia are towns outside Milan, in the Lombardy region. All are famous for their wine.

Sì, ma lentamente

al municipio di cinisello intenerito dai fulmini
e tiritere degli aerei, a quello che di balsamo, visto nel forello
delle chiavarde e delle svolte
a vanvera: al circondario
di monza nella rinomata
temperie dei manzi dei manzetti e dei salumi
nostrani: alle tarde
piene di muggiò fatte di nuvole
di stufato, umide, colte dentro i fischi viola e nell'acetilene, e sopra
in alto al bastione intemerato dei fulmini futuri, che
verranno e non verranno,
al sindaco malato, al prevosto che ragiona crepitando
con le mandibole delle cicale: ai ciclisti,
ai grilli alitanti e il fiatone seminato
sul manubrio del manubrio, sopra i parafanghi: e,
in fondo, in fondo a tutti, nel salubre
connubio dei ragionari festivi o di bassa
risonanza delle anatomie bovine
nel criptio delle carrucole, delle serrande?
chi che aspetta di sentire le parole? o voi
aspettate di sentire le cose tra le cose? o qui si aspetta
di udire le cose e le parole? ma chi cose
e parole chi dice, dove sono? parlare
sì, si può: è libero parlare: e con chi parla?
diremo insieme le creazioni, le cose scarnite
e scottanti. e che e come e sotto che fogliame raro
sarà il nuovo, l'altro, peccato originale. dominus
sit in corde, amore mio,
meu bem. o voialtri che sapete che rosa
che rosa ma che rosa che state aspettando?
"cambia voce" disse allora una sagoma dal chiaro
fosco, disse: "cambia disco! le idee
le abbiamo consumate mate tutte!" e mi umilia.
dagli spalti dell'ambone sciogli, anima corta e sventaglia
il fazzoletto rosso dove hai sperperato pietrisco
e gli scaracchi della mezza predica, e tartagliando
e masticando stracchino e la barbera,
spalanca l'acqua del libro e leggerai:
"ora avvenne
che le cimici entrarono nelle commessure della nave,
e fecero molte e figlie e figli, generazioni assai,
come la sabbia innumere del muto, del perenne.
ora avvenne. avvenne che la grand'arca là,
senza la chiave, non fu calafatata per mancanza

di materie prime *in loco*, e tutto invece
tappata con lievito e bucce delle fave. ora avvenne.
che le cimici moltiplicando come le stelle a fuoco
del firmamento squartarono premendo il transatlantico,
e infine avvenne che dall'alto iddio
maledisse le cimici e noè e gli innocenti, e va bè,
pargoli e le pudende e tutti, e così sia, transeat".
attendiamo, pazienza che verrà, mettiamoci alla cosa:
verrà quando nella sera nel paese poco
dove incrociano al largo i cirri incandescenti delle secche
pietanze e gli strilli della balera o dancing, in una prosa
di vino, quando teneramente mulinando primavera fra le stecche
e musicando spargerà per l'emisfero colorito, a grandi
manciate le cavallette e i grani e le fontane
del grano universale e del corniolo, e venire
venere somma e un lume inimitabile di iridio
(ci avrà i capelli
che ci hanno il colore
che ci ha il frumento
e come il colore
che come il firmamento
che sono gli occhi suoi,
o giuramento, sì,
la sposerò.
la sposerò davanti all'altare)
ho da parlarvi teneramente mulinando da parlarvi
di odio, della prudenza, e, con ironico fare,
di cicli e vini vari e condimenti, e di ragioni?
della grande saggezza di dopo l'imminente peccato originale
o dei morti dei vivi e delle bestie tradizionali?
dire quanto è lungo il verme che lavora nel mollo delle prime
mele? o da insegnarvi guardare con il collo
storto nel piatto dove mangi carnagione, smalto e sali?
sì, sette anni di magra, sette,
sette di siccità:
non abbiamo torrenti
se non quelli bruttati dal tannino, pozzi
non abbiamo che sciutti, che foppe
basse: quali aride piene come le coppe ime
allora, che retate e quale
lume, quali immortali affogati
potremo rimpiangere, potremo e scongiurare,
piangere e sospirar?
piazza dei cinisèi
ohi romboli
ohi rombolà

non abbiamo ricchezze, né armi che i vegetali
né canzoni insigni, né bellezza
noi di qui: non abbiám là
e nemmeno povertà:
non abbiamo né ragione né pietà,
non abbiamo il metro che misura
le pertiche tradizionali: cosa diremo quali
e quali vangeli decimali predicare? Anche le foglie esigue
esigue al soffio esposte e dal vento
ninnate sembran le povere ali senza corpo, e chi predica
sistemi al popolo delle foglie, chi insegna
il comunismo agli animali sulle soglie?
e foglia e rifoglia
rifoglia biondina
l'amore si sfoglia
l'amore e la vita.
sovvenire non si può nei giorni
se non ai casi estremi: pensando
voi volete le parole belle, sagomate a spaghi, a trepidi
contorni, volete le parole non parole, e tutto
volete: il frutto i semi gli aghi adorni,
ma tutto non si può, o magari
tutto non si deve non conviene è brutto:
forse dire cose altissime e lustrate o ideare
sagome ideali e pure con la pertica
della cuccagna: voi volete, volendo, le parole
per quando insieme aperti gli occhi o quando
grevi come le castagne li chiudiamo,
comprendere volete e non comprendere
per dopo il prossimo imminente già vicino altro peccato originale
col ciondolo leràì
col ciondolo lerèra
e già di là lontano si sfogano i galli impegolati della sera,
nel sugo lustrante della nafta, scocca
il murmure precipite, l'iridio costeggiando,
delle pianelle da muggiò, una falange
gli scialli morbidissimi di cinisello, la luganiga
livida nella città di monza e il buon odore
che sfolla controvento cespso e tra le frange:
soli soli saliranno in cima al campanile, pange
lingua gloriosi, a percepirvi insieme in fila transitare morti e vivi corrosi
morti dei vivi nel precipite sussurro dell'iridio
e non sai se l'olio che ci danno
è imbroglio, o inganno il vaglia.
transito! ma un po' alla volta col segreto
naturale della paglia e delle nespole spacciate,

dei papaveri caduti in mezzo ai grani,
un po' alla volta ma un po' piano capiremo
il dritto e il torto, i vani
nitriti sul filo trepidante, delle redini,
e l'unità e lo spirito, credi
tu che credo anch'io, credi e non credi, e sentiremo
le spalle più leggere sotto maglia, e l'unica
qui è di fare sempre un po' per bene.
ti vien voglia – di cantare piano
e fare marameo – col palmo della mano
ai profeti in carne ed ossa
ai mercanti sull'orlo della fossa.
beato chi a bella vista la luna anche di giorno trova
vagabondare tra la gente, piova o faccia bello,
e quando si avvita la nebbia intorno all'ultimo
corno della sera, e i bambini di milano
stanno ancora in giro con il brucio sul cavallo
e sotto ascelle per racimolare dai calcestri qualche cosa,
e ridonda un grande
prèmito rosso, i tonfi sani con misura della macchina stradale,
il tamburo selvaggio, il cuore delle brughiere
che si ascolta in tutti i campi, dalla biella
e dal pistone e dal pedale, o quasi
il furtivo grattare delle pianelle nel lustrante
della nafta, che passeggiano da muggiò, o i diti
della pioggia sulla vigneta del prevosto, o sugli scialli
o sulle foglie dei moroni tonti.
ma cosa saranno allora i paragoni fini? i conti? è roba
da mangiare o roba da dormire o è un salario?
è foglia passa d'autunno che cade sopra le rotaie
e fa slittare i tram in modo vario, o altro? ma
paragoni invece fini sono
le parole che aspettate, oppure
le cose che aspettate, come quell'uno
che aspetta in certi giorni venir giù la pioggia, e alla fin fine
dopo tutti i conti, dopo il vento e il vago prèmito,
scende con gentil misura, con circospezione, come
ai bambini il latte della tetta?
eh, no. non proprio
non propriamente queste cose qui,
col ciondolo lerài
col ciondolo lerèra.
o che si possa insegnare con parole
toccanti e colorate, quanto s'allevino per le stuoie
s'allevino i bigatti e i modi le tecniche le maniere?
ognuno parla come se stesso e tutti parliamo

nel mondo come tutti
cosa vogliamo
cosa dai germi e dagli insetti? trapelano
di foglia in foglia
e sfoglia e risfoglia
rifoglia biondina
l'amore la vita
perché noi tutti di qua siamo quei che ha paura, per remota
impazienza, non solo di morire ma di perdere una cosa
di quello che un tempo è stato guadagnato, di perdere
un tempo, con tanti pareri e oscure
manipolazioni, nel grande passato, la pelle, il vento,
il lustro, il liscio, il dolce, il buio che stormisce
di bruco in bruco, tra la particella, tra le cose, l'aura
e la corrente ariosa in policromi aghi sotto gli astri
magari, pungere i semi non maturi, un fragile magnete
in ogni sposa, il freddissimo intelletto
che spinge l'accattone a scegliersi, degli angoli, quell'angolo là!
passando e ripassando
con grande opinione
tra le due ali bislacche
del pomeriggio della colazione,
senza sapere, un giorno
si capita nel gran nebbione
nostrano dove le vacche
tutto hanno un solo, intorno,
colore beige, o viola o avano.
questi erano i mattini limpidi come un bicchiere
risciacquato in molti lavandini e bacinelle di zinco,
chiari i mattini stavano nelle robinie trasparenti, e stracche
gibigiane e rase e sventolate, e il rude e il pelo
gigante delle cotiche e la gente
che voleva coglionarvi qui, *in loco*,
quando il cranio roco del porcello che s'impunta mareggiava
senza quiete un'altra alba di cristalli, l'alta
bufera, la sete, un po' per volta, e prude le nature
in petto tormentando carne uccelle, e ragazze
lombarde coi pedùli e le solette nylon velature.
una scarpa e una ciabatta chi se la lega chi se la gratta e
dente milanese che morda
intelligenza che non ricorda
formica che scivola sulla corda e
una scarpa e una ciabatta chi se la lega chi se la gratta e
malinconici milanesi
dalle pelli ben stirate
a tamburo e tamburelli e

per male o per bene che vada
milanesi siamo sempre quelli e
milanesi generosi, che vi pare
regalare caramelle
di puro zucchero alle belle
figliole di motta industriale?
un po' per volta col segreto ascolta
il maturare della paglia e delle nespole nel fuoco
sottilissimo, e un po' per volta
tutti noi noi capiremo il dritto o il torto,
la striglia, l'unità, il lungo e il corto
e il naturale; ascolta nei sinistri
tocca-tocca maturare primavera e
sentiremo la bocca più leggera, quando un'italia
animale molta nelle costole passerà, nel gran costato
malinconicamente, una conoscenza
eroica, musicale, un'invenzione colta, generata
di aspetti buoni e parapiglia: e non l'elettrica
o qualche altra sfatta luce o simili bruciori,
ma la brina sopra il sopra ciglia, e giù di lì
la musica guardare e riguardare; e non l'elettrica
(o qualche altra sfatta luce terrena)
ma il murmure precipite dell'iridio, ma il lume
inevitabile dell'iridio, nello smaglio lanceolato delle sere immortali
e su nel celeste
poligono remoto
tra iadi e pleiadi
neghittose in moto
bruciare grandi
i grandi genitali
sul lago ove ulisse
faceva le imprese.
altre favole ci sono, favole
ancora, e la musica
degli altri, la musica di quelli là che sembra
non già la musica, ma il pantano della foppa, e beato
chi ti trova la luna dirottata tra la gente sulle labbra
timide dell'universo, nel murmure dell'iridio quando
vicino a sera incerta tra la gente umanissima
si rampica la nebbia sopra l'aeroporto
verso la manica a vento, nel campo della bredda, nel paesano
spirito aranciato delle sere immortali
che carezza le scene e flemmatica gli omeri e le balzane
cose delle baggiane dalle smorte vene e dalle cosce
lunghe di segala vegetale, quando
sui fili dei celesti sali urlano le sirene delle aziende

e il rubicondo respiro dei fuggiaschi solleoni e il luogo
dei luoghi nottambuli allagati della lomellina,
e le irrigazioni colore di viola nei momenti delicati:
nelle congiunture: abbiamo per i nostri passi
delle città, città sopra la terra, sotto la terra, e a filo
di terra negli scantinati:
e sassi deteniamo e galline di rarissimo colore e bisce
di cristallo e le caraffe lisce ed il mastello
al sole e cieli di iridio se fa bello
e gazoze appannate per i defunti nel giorno dell'uffizio
e cimase baluginanti colore cadmio nello smaglio
lanceolato delle sere immortali!
siamo seri! in sagrestia
maggiore il chierichetto
stuzzica con un cero il petto
delle colombe che non volan via
e il popolo che ascolta dai gradini
il calmo fragore dell'aeronave
e il prevosto che cerca la chiave
nel tumulto dei bambini
e il popolo che sente sul sagrato
come a quota mica male
vola, quota lieve, quota
celeste, come ridere una trota
nella grande acqua universale,
e l'elica girare e fare argentea ruota!
e l'universo è qui, qui solamente a un pelo,
l'universo è qui, a un pelo di ciglio,
a un pelo di ciglio di zanzara le ali
umettate nel rorido lampaneggio
di improvvise compiète giallo cadmio,
pane salato, salso paese zafferano, serpi rifatti
in stato di cadavere, in statu
prisco: e scale di legname tutto a scuro dove sbatti
il menisco se scendi troppo di precisa.
ma o trapassati con veste di gracile sofferenza, lunga storia
di tenebre dentro la quale il nostro episodio si cancella
e alla cieca brandisce, si spuntano le nostre armi:
le bucce dei grilli
i noccioli di ciliegia,
la sansa dei marroni
affumicati, i semi
di girasole e di tomates:
e i trilli strozzati
nella strozza dei passeri
scuotendo le nostre trombe

o trapassati con veste di gracile sofferenza, fuoruscite
dalla crisalide brutta dei secoli celtici o spagnoli
o comunisti, fuori dalla custodia, fuori
a bere i soli balsamici succhi della vita
e della sorte: rispecchiatevi in fronte,
in piazza, alla fonte, sul fondo dei ramaioli,
specchiatevi nello spirito spirituale: lasciate
in tale guisa baluginare nell'opera del verbo
e delle interiezioni e dei vocaboli di scarto,
come in una reale lontananza la cuspide
di iridio dove il fulmine si strema e si confonde:
il verde della vostra mirabile carnagione, la gazosa
spumeggiante sulle lastre, e il rifiorire
concorde dei gelsi, tale è la rinomanza
caduca ma solenne nel grido eccellente delle bestie.
adesso lentamente
è venuto tardi, sì, ma tardi
sì, ma lentamente.

Yes, but slowly

to the town hall in cinisello softened by lighting
and the lullabies of planes, to that of balsamo, seen through
the key hole and the turning
at random: to the district
of monza in the famous
cultural atmosphere of veal of meats of salamis
homemade: to the late
high waters of muggiò¹ made of stewed
clouds, humid, caught within purple whistles and acetylene, and above
on high to the ramparts undefiled by future lighting, that
will or will not come,
to the sick mayor, to the parson who reasons crackling
with the jaws of cicadas: to the cyclists,
to the crickets breathing and the panting sown
across the handle of the handlebars, above the fenders: and,
behind, behind everyone, in the wholesome
alliance of festive or low resonating
discussions about bovine anatomies
in the crackling of pulleys, of shutters?
who expects words to be heard? or you
expect to hear things among things? or is it that one expects
to hear things and words? but who says things
and who says words, where are they? speak
yes, you can: speech is free: and you speak with whom?
together we'll say the creations, the things essential

and pressing. and what and how and under what rare foliage
will be the new, the other, original sin. dominus
sit in corde,² my love,
meu bem.³ or the rest of you who know what rose
what rose but what rose you're waiting for?
"change tune" then said a shape from the clear
gloom, it said: "change the music! ideas
we've consumed -umed them all!" and it shames me.
from the battlement of the pulpit you loosen, short soul and fan
the red kerchief where you squandered crushed stone
and the spit of half a sermon, and stammering
and chewing stracchino and barbera,⁴
part the waters of the book and you will read:
"now it happened
that the fleas entered the ship's joints
and they made many girls and boys, generations a plenty,
like the innumerable sand of silence, of the everlasting.
now it happened. happened that the great ark there,
without the key, was not caulked for lack
of prime materials *in loco*, and everything instead
plugged with yeast and the husks of beans. now it happened
that the fleas multiplying like the firmament's
fiery stars quartered pressing the transatlantic liner,
and finally happened that from on high god
cursed the fleas and noah and the innocent, and okay,
little children and pudenda and everyone, and so it be, transeat."⁵
we wait, patience will come, let's get to the thing:
it will come when in the evening in the little town
where the incandescent clouds of dried meals cross off shore
and the shouts of barn dances or halls, in a winy
prose, when spring tenderly milling between false notes
and musically will spread across the colored hemisphere,
in great handfuls the grasshoppers and grain and fountains
of the universal grain and the cornel tree, and venus
supreme venus and a inimitable light of iridium
(it will have hair
that has the color
that has the wheat
and like the color
that like the firmament
that are her eyes,
or promise, yes,
i'll marry her.
i'll marry her in church)
i must speak to you tenderly milling to speak to you
of hate, prudence, and, with irony,

of cycles and different wines and condiments, and reasons?
of the great wisdom following the imminent original sin
or of dead of living and traditional beasts?
or say how long is the worm working in the soft flesh of the first
apples? or should i teach you how to watch with neck turned
to the plate where you eat complexion,⁶ polish and salts?
yes, seven years of low waters, seven
seven of drought:
we don't have torrents
if not those soiled by the tannin, wells
we don't have but dry, and shallow
ditches: which arid high waters full like lowly cups
then, what round up and which
light, which immortal death by drowning⁷
can we regret, can we implore,
weep and sigh?⁸
square in cinisello
eh rumble ling
eh ramble lang
we don't have riches, nor weapons other than vegetables
nor distinguished songs, nor beauty
us around here: we don't have over there
and not even poverty:
we don't have reason nor pity,
we don't have the standard that measures
the traditional rods⁹: what will we say which
and which decimal gospels will we preach? even small leaves
small exposed to the breath and lulled by the wind
they look like poor wings without a body, and who
preaches systems to the population of leaves, who
teaches communism to animals on thresholds?
and leaf and releaf
releaf blondie
love leafed through
love and life.
one cannot remember in the days
if not in extreme cases: thinking
you all want beautiful words, shaped like threads, with anxious
borders, you want words that aren't words, and you want
everything: the fruit the seeds the adorned needles
but everything one can't, or maybe
one shouldn't not worth it it's ugly:
maybe say lofty and polished things or devise
ideal shapes and even the greasy
pole¹⁰: you all want, if you want, words
when eyes are open together or when

heavy like chestnuts we close them,
you all want to understand and not understand
after the next imminent already close other original sin
with a swing a ling
with a swang a lang.
and already over there far away the tarred cocks of the night let off steam,
polishing in the juice of naphtha, the precipitous
murmur strikes, iridium coasting,
of slippers from muggiò, a phalange
the supplest shawls from cinisello, the livid
luganiga¹¹ in the city of monza and the crisp smell
that scatters against the wind and between the fringe:
alone alone they will climb to the bell tower, pange
lingua gloriosi,¹² to perceive the dead and living crossing in file corroded
dead of the living in the precipitous murmur of iridium
and you don't know if the oil they give us
is genuine, or if the money order is fake.
just passing through! but a little at a time with the natural
secret of hay and peddled medlars,¹³
of poppies fallen in the wheat fields,
a little at a time but a bit slower we shall understand
the wrong and the right, the vain
neighs on the trembling blade, of the reins,
and unity and the spirit, do you believe
that I believe as well, you do and do not believe, and we shall feel
our shoulders lighter under shirts, and the only thing
is to always do some good.
you feel the need – to sing slowly
and to cock a snook – with the palm of your hand
at prophets in flesh and blood
at merchants with one foot in the grave.
lucky are those who see the moon even in daytime found
roaming among the people, rain or shine,
and when the fog winds around the last
horn of the evening, and the children of milan
are still out with a burning in their crotch
and under armpits to collect something from the asphalt,¹⁴
and a great red tenesmus
abounds, the healthy measured beat of the street machine,
the wild drum, the heart of the moorlands
heard in all the fields, from the connecting rod
and the piston and the pedal, or almost
the stealthy shuffling of slippers in the polishing
of naphtha, that walk from muggiò, or the fingers
of rain on the parson's vineyard, or on the shawls
or on the leaves of dumb mulberry trees.

but then what will become of subtle comparisons? calculations?
is it for eating or for sleeping or is it a salary?
is it the withered leaf in autumn that falls on the tracks
and causes the tram to slip in a varied way, or something else? but
rather subtle comparisons are
words that you all wait for, or rather
the things you all wait for, like that one
who waits for the rain to fall on certain days, and at the very end
after all the calculations, after the wind and the vague tenesmus,
descends with gentle measure, with circumspection, like
milk from tit to child?
well, not quite. not exactly
not these things here,
with a swing a ling
with a swang a lang.
or that can be taught with words
touching and colorful, how many silkworms are
grown on mats and modes techniques manners?
everyone speaks as themselves and we all speak
in the world like everyone else
what do we want
what from germs and insects? they slip out
from leaf to leaf
and leaf through and releaf
releaf blondie
love life
because everyone here is someone who is scared, out of remote
impatience, not only to die but to lose something
of what was once earned, to lose
a time, with many opinions and obscure
manipulations, amid the vast past, the skin, the wind,
the luster, the smooth, the sweet, the darkness that rustles
from worm to worm, between the particles, between things, the breeze
and the airy current in polychrome needles under the stars
maybe, puncture immature seeds, a brittle magnet
in every bride, the cold intellect
that pushes the beggar to choose, out of corners, that corner there!
passing and passing again
with great consideration
between the two bizarre wings
of the afternoon of breakfast,
without knowing, one day
we're caught in that
thick local fog where cows,
everything, around, has only one
color, beige or purple or havana

these were the mornings limpid as a glass
rinsed in many sinks and zinc basins,
clear mornings in transparent locust trees, and worn out
glaring and smooth and fluttering, and the roughness
the gigantic hair of rinds and the people
who wanted to make a fool out of you here, *in loco*,
when the pig's raucous cranium that jibs wavering
another restless dawn of crystals, the high
storm, the thirst, a little at a time, and natures' itching
in the chest tormenting skinny birds, and lombard girls
in hiking boots and insert nylon stockings.
a shoe and a slipper those who tie it those who scratch it and
milanese tooth that bites
intelligence that does not recall
ant that slides on the rope and
a shoe and a slipper those who tie it those who itch it
melancholy milanese
with well ironed skins
taut like a drum and tambourine and
be it good times or bad times
milanese we're always the same and
generous milanese,¹⁵ who to you seem
to give out candy
made of pure sugar to the beautiful
daughters of motta, the industrialist?¹⁶
a little at a time listen in secret
to the ripening of hay and medlars in the subtlest
fire, and a little at a time everyone of us
we will understand the right and the wrong
and the horse brush, the unity, the long and short
and the natural; listen in the sinisters
touch-touch ripening springs and
we will feel our mouths lighter, when a very
animal italy will run through our ribs, melancholically
through the great rib cage, a heroic,
musical, knowledge, or a learned invention, generated
by nice aspects and turmoil: and not the electric
or some other worn out light or similar burns,
but the frost above the eye brow, and there about
music watch it and watch again; and not the electric
(or some other worn out earthly light)
but the precipitous murmur of iridium, but iridium's
inevitable light in the lanceolate unraveling of immortal evenings
and up in the remote
celestial polygon
between hyades and pleiades

slothful in motion
burning great
the great genitals
on the lake where ulysses
carried out his feats.
there are other fables, fables
still, and the music
of others, the music of those over there that doesn't
seem like music at all, but the morass of the ditch, and lucky
are those who find the high-jacked moon among people on the
timid lips of the universe, in the murmur of iridium when
close to an uncertain evening between the kindest people
the fog climbs above the airport
toward the windsock, into breda's¹⁷ field, in the rustic
orange-colored spirit of immortal evenings
caressing the scenes and soothing the shoulders and the eccentric
things of dumb girls with pale veins and long thighs
of vegetable rye, when
on the strings of celestial salts the factory sirens scream
and the rubicund breath of fugitive dog days and the place
of all night-owl places in the flooded lomellina,¹⁸
and purple colored irrigations at delicate moments:
in the joints: on our walk
some cities, cities above ground, below ground and on the
level of basements:
and we hold pebbles and hens of the rarest color and snakes
of crystal and smooth pitchers and the basins
in the sun and skies of iridium if it's nice out
and gazosa¹⁹ fogged for the dead on the day of the service
and the flickering cadmium color roof in the lanceolate
unraveling of immortal evenings!
let's be serious! in the main sacristy
the altar boy
with a candle tickles the breasts
of doves that don't fly away
and the people that listen from the steps
to the calm rumble of airships
and the parson looking for the key
amid the tumult of children
and the crowd that hears it in the churchyard
at an amazing height
how it flies, light height, celestial
height, as if nothing like a trout
in the great universal waters,
and the propeller turning and the silvery cartwheels!
and the universe is here, a hair away

a mosquito's eyelash away wings
 moistened in the dewy sparkle
 of improvised complines yellow cadmium,
 salted bread, salty saffron country, snakes laid out
 as corpses, in statu
 prisco²⁰: and wooden ladder in the dark where you bump
 your kneecap if you descend in haste.
 but or deceased dressed in feeble suffering, long story
 of darkness where our episode is erased
 and blindly brandishes, are weapons dulled:
 the crickets' shell
 the cherries' pit
 the chestnuts' residue
 smoked, tomato
 and sunflower seeds:
 the strangled trills
 in the throats of sparrows
 rattling our trumpets
 or deceased dressed in feeble suffering, exited from
 the ugly chrysalis of celtic centuries or spanish
 or communist, out of the sleeve, out
 to drink the only balsamic juices of life
 and fate: look at your faces in the mirror,
 in the square, at the spring, at the bottom of ladles,
 mirror yourselves in the spiritual spirit: in this
 fashion let the cusp of iridium where lightening
 grows weak and confused flicker
 in the work of the verb and interjections and
 second rate words, as in a real distance:
 the green of your marvelous complexion, the frothy
 gazosa on the slabs, and the harmonious
 re-flourishing of mulberry trees, such is the fleeting
 yet solemn fame amid the excellent scream of beasts.
 now slowly
 it's late, yes, but late
 yes, but slowly.

¹ *Cinisello Balsamo* is a commune outside Milan. *Muggiò* is a town in the province of *Monza*, also outside Milan.

² The expression *Dominus sit in corde* (May the Lord be in my heart) is found in the *Munda cor Meum* (Cleanse my heart) of a traditional Catholic mass.

³ Portuguese for "my honey."

⁴ *Stracchino* is a soft cheese from Lombardy and *Barbera* is wine produced in Piedmont.

⁵ Latin for "Let it go."

⁶ In the original, *Carnagione* is a play on words also referring to *Cacciagione*, meaning game caught for eating.

⁷ Most likely a reference to T.S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*, section four: *Death By Water*.

⁸ Villa makes several references to popular Italian songs throughout the poem. For example, this verse, *piangere e sospirar* (weep and sigh), is a parody of “Quel mazzolin di fiori.” Other verses reminiscent of popular Italian melodies are: *ohi romboli / ohi rombolà* and *foglia e rifoglia / rifoglia biondina...* (nonsensical verses typical of nursery rhymes, translated here as *eh rumble ling / eh ramble lang* and *leaf and releaf / releaf blondie*), and *col ciondolo lerài / col ciondolo lerèra* (with a swing a ling / with a swang a lang) alludes to the song *Ciondolo* (Pendant). Here the verses refer to both a woman’s pendant and the male member, both of which “swing.”

⁹ A linear measure used by the ancient Romans, typically ten feet in length.

¹⁰ *Pertica della cuccagna* in the original: a traditional game played at Marti Gras in which someone must climb a greased pole to reach bounties lying at the top, such as a leg of prosciutto or a wheel of cheese.

¹¹ A type of sausage.

¹² The medieval Latin hymn *Pange Lingua Gloriosi Corporis Mysterium* was written by St. Thomas Aquinas for the feast of Corpus Christi.

¹³ Italian proverb: *Col tempo e con la paglia maturano le nespole* (All good things come to those who wait).

¹⁴ *Calcestro* in the original. A cheap type of pavement composed of recycled materials from which children would collect various trinkets.

¹⁵ This rings of the old Milanese saying *Milanes-sem, Milanes-sarem, Milanes-restum* (Milanese we are, Milanese we’ll always be and Milanese we’ll remain).

¹⁶ The *Motta* family owned a chain of pastry shops in and around Milan and was famous for their Panettone.

¹⁷ Founded in 1886 just outside Milan, the Breda company manufactures locomotives, armaments, aircraft, buses and trams.

¹⁸ Part of the Po river valley, the *Lomellina* is an area located in south-western Lombardy.

¹⁹ *Gazosa* (also *Gassosa*) is a drink of carbonated water and sugar.

²⁰ *In statu prisco* is Latin for “in a very ancient state.”

Da *Oramai* / From *By Now**

* Among the holdings of the Biblioteca Panizzi in Reggio Emilia is found Villa's only copy of his *Oramai*, which is a printed version of the collection and not its original manuscript. Over the years he made changes to the text, mostly in the form of eliminations of entire stanzas. His redactions are without dates, but we may assume these alterations were made later in life as he began to sabotage his own archives. I have translated from the collection as it was originally printed and footnoted any changes Villa made later.

Cosa c'è di nuovo

Di nuovo c'è che ai giovanotti ramazzati via
non si può tenere spalancate più le palpebre
con gli stecchini a punta, vita non ce n'hanno più:

di nuovo c'è gli occhi bianchicci dei maschi
milanesi sui fili del filobus, dei tram, sui pali;
mica sarà triste seguire a mirarsi negli occhi tristemente!

di nuovo c'è che tra la polpa e l'ossa c'è che fa caldo
e che fa freddo a una ragazza che possiede gli occhi
come una compagna arata dalla guerra, fuoriporta;

di nuovo c'è che poche piante vanno avanti a venir su;
e mani conciate di ragadi e di caligine
accendono le stufe di ghisa, non c'è gas;

c'è che trema la sostanza universale, e il nostro cuore
non per vanto, né per forza, ma mi sembra buono, e trema
un rumore di vie d'acqua, vie d'acqua e ferrovie:

il vento ha lasciato solchi di poggia e macchie d'unto
sull'intonaco delle facciate larghe quindici metri,
e solchi, cioè rughe, nella piazza lustra degli anziani;

le finestre sono una semenza tra fanali: e io
che semino fiato e gran buontempo, e tu
che in su e in giù passeggi per le arterie del centro;

e io che faccio stracci paragoni, e tu che porti
la bellezza malinconica e avara dentro l'ombra rossa
d'essere ancora bella, ragazza come una campagna;

e io che so fare complimenti dimenticati, e tu passare;
e tu che pensi che bisogna guardare quello che bisogna,
e io che penso agli animali barbelanti che torneranno

ancora come una volta a pisciare vicino all'aria; e tu
fammi una lista musicale di panni da asciugare
all'aria generosa e sventurata della nostra camporella.

What's New

What's new is that one can no longer keep
the eyelids of swept away young men open
with sharpened toothpicks, they're no longer alive:

what's new is the whitish eyes of Milanese
men upon the wires of trolleys, trams and poles;
don't tell me it's sad to go on looking sadly in each other's eyes!

what's new is that between flesh and bone there's something
that turns a girl either hot or cold, who has eyes
like a countryside plowed by war, outside the city walls;

what's new is that few plants continue to grow;
and hands ruined by lesions and soot
light the cast-iron stoves, there is no gas;

is that the universal substance trembles, and our heart
not out of pride, nor power, but it seems good, and a sound
of water ways trembles, water ways and train tracks:

the wind has left furrows of rain and greasy stains
on the plaster of facades fifteen meters wide, and
furrows, that is wrinkles, in the old folks' polished square;

windows are a seed among headlights: and I
sow breath and great goodtime, and you
walk up and down the main streets of town;

and I make ragged comparisons, and you carry
the stingy and melancholy beauty within the red shade
of still being beautiful, a girl like a countryside;

and I know how to give forgotten compliments, and you move on;
and you think that one needs to watch what is needed,
and I think about shivering animals that will once again

piss close to the air like they used to; and you
make me a musical list of clothes to dry
in the generous and hapless air of our *camporella*.¹

¹ *Andare in camporella* is the act of going to the countryside for heavy petting or love making.

Pezzo 1941

Potrebbe darsi
che l'aria un giorno
qualunque, viaggiasse
per l'aria a malincuore,

e ma se il lago di Garda non recupera col tempo
tutta la polvere mangiata dai ciclisti in gare assurde,
i chilometri che non contano, fatti per niente,

e ma fin quando agli stradali con le pioppe nichelate
parlino l'ozono e la pioggia a fil di terra d'ideali
giubilei, di comunismo fresco 'me 'ne rosa

e ci succeda allora quasi

come se nel seno martoriato dalle lance,
devozioni premurose, tenerezze, vanità,
le nostre diocesi annegassero una per una
un po' alla volta, e dentro l'altro
effimero vaso dell'aria con un riso fraterno
sopra a galla la gente naufragata
salissero, ma senza
il corpo folto come il corpo o come cosa

e fin quando il cappone renitente,
prigioniero sul ciglio delle nebbie o nelle
stoppie violette dell'autunno, non morisse
eroicamente colpito da quel temperino che si tira
per caso, e che lo sbuca a sangue in uno stinco; o

l'odore dei vagoni strisci ai posti di blocco
e sappia infine che le notti della terra
e i mugli dalle stalle briantine, e il fiato

dei foraggi forestieri, e l'aria piena
di stufato con il manzo nostrano, e il resto
sullo zinco in sonanti nichelini, come mani
brinate toccheranno il firmamento: e qualche

biglia d'agata recondita nel panico ronfare
delle pioppe ci farà o lume o scuro

e mica i cieli

sono un capitale sicuro, senza fondo, o una miniera
priva di patria e sentimento

pertanto corrano le truppe a far ombre coi pastrani
sul lavorerio di frontiere per le miglia e miglia,
anno per anno; e più l'ascoso affanno dei respiri
qui in patria cresce e con più gela
nel caos, e qui trapela,
come una nostalgia obbligatoria il pesce
della lume settentrionale, le voltate
a biscia del vagone, le sue soste, i giri
in campagna lunghissimi, in mezzo alla pittura
notturna dell'acqua fina fina e della guazza

per cui, matto di debolezza in faccia al terrestre sogno
dove i sassi maturino d'Europa, o galleggino
come rottami i giardini patrizi nel naviglio della pace,
le nazioni escogitate nel sogno degli strani
cancellieri con la testa piena di pigne

matto di sentimenti l'ultimo navigante o macchinista
o marinaio d'acqua dolce e chiusa, o corridore
in pista, dimenticati gli argenti dei canali e delle verze,
il mormorio delle posate d'alpacca che si nettano
dopo desinare in una fiacca lenta dalle porte
spalancate per le alzaie, se ne vada
al di là dell'anima

e che al di là dell'anima ogni cosa è specchio
d'una celeste cattolica confusione, né vogliamo
credere troppo al nostro corpo, questo specchio, e basta,
per questo tempo, con la luce che ci dà fastidio

però noi altri in tanto siamo, con timore,
con reverenza, e gli uni e gli altri, e poi,
su dai registri indaffarati dei poveri del comune,
noi transitiamo, come la nuvola patita, verso il buono
liquore dell'atlantico, in fondo alla provincia,
senza rumore di frontiere o corridoi: è là

che tutto sarà vago e irreprensibile, tutto
comune; non una spanna di penombra
più forte mai appare là più della notte

elettrica, da pesci.

*1941 Piece*¹

It could be
that on any given
day air would travel
half-heartedly through the air,

maybe, but if Lake Garda fails to recover in time
all the dust eaten by cyclists in meaningless races,
and kilometers that don't count, good for nothing,

maybe, as long as the ozone and the horizontal rain
speak to traffic cops with nicked stands of poplar
about ideal jubilees, communism fresh as a rose

and then we would feel
as if in our chests mangled by spears,
thoughtful devotions, affections, vanities,
our dioceses were to drown one by one
little by little, and inside the other
ephemeral vase of air, shipwrecked people
were to surface
with a brotherly laugh, but without
the body dense as a body or as any thing

and as long as the dodging capon,
trapped on the edge of the fog or within
autumn's violet stubble, failed to die
heroically wounded by that pocket knife thrown
by chance, stuck in his shins until blood is spilled; or

as long as the train's smell slithers to checkpoints
and realizes in the end that the world's nights
and the lowing from the stalls of Brianza², and the breath

of foreign fodder, and the air filled
with a stew of local beef, and the change
of musical coins across the zinc counter, will touch
the firmament with frosted hands: and then

some agate marbles concealed in the panic snore
of those poplars will serve as lamps or blinds

and it's not like the heavens
are a sound, bottomless investment, or a mine
devoid of fatherland and feeling

therefore, let the troops hurry like shades with coats
on the borders rubbing mile after mile,
year after year; and more so the hidden anguish of breaths
grows here in the fatherland and furthermore freezes
in this chaos, and here the fish seeps out,
like mandatory nostalgia for the northern star, and
the train's snake-like turns, stops, the long
detours through the countryside, through the nocturnal
paint of drizzling rain and murk

thus, drunk with weakness facing the earthly dream
where the stones of Europe mature, where stately
gardens float in the *naviglio*³ of peace,
nations devised in the dreams of strange
chancellors with rocks in their heads

drunk with emotion the last seafarer or engineer
or fresh water sailor, or athlete at the track,
forgotten the silvery shimmer of canals and verdure,
the murmur of pewter silverware washed
in doorways opening onto towpaths
in that slow after-supper idleness, let him go
beyond the soul

and then again, beyond the soul everything is a mirror
of celestial Catholic confusion, nor do we want to
believe in our bodies too much, this mirror, enough,
for the time being, with this annoying light

yet meanwhile the rest of us exist, both one and the other,
fearfully, reverentially, and then,
rising from the busy welfare rolls
we pass, like sickly clouds, toward the fine liquor
of the Atlantic, at the county's end,
without the noise of borders or hallways: that's where

everything will be vague and flawless, everything
in common; there, not a single strip of twilight
ever appears stronger than the night

electric, fish-like.

¹ In the original, the conditional clause of the first stanza sets in motion a number of twists and turns throughout the poem that are marked by the subjunctive tense. Since English, unlike Italian, does not use a different verbal form to distinguish between the indicative and subjunctive, certain adverbs have been added to the translation in order to highlight these syntactical shifts.

² See note on page 154.

³ See note on page 146.

Però prima del vento

Però, prima del vento,
prima che il vento piova
a lungo andare, a stesa,

i verbi coniugati a malapena, e i gemi-
ti, e imprese, e faccende e càno-
ni, il bene della vita,

sono i semi riscaldati tra le dita
di una sola mano, di una lingua
sciolta, di una lingua nuova;

e le radici semplici o gemi-
nate, nel nuvolo sommerso
dei parlari, per un secolo

almeno! E siete voi pronti
a non conoscere, e a negare,
a pronunciare detti assurdi,

come così: “Credo quia...”?
“credo che è ora di andar via”,
“credo che tutto”, e “penso che”?

Però prima che venga
prima che l’ombra della bellezza
annuvoli i moderni continenti,

però prima che venga
tardi, e che qualcuno
bussi alla porta, o il telefono

squilli e ci interrompa,
facciamo tutti insieme qualche cosa:
la speranza non è finita, ma comincia:

quella cosa nel pieno delle cose
ci darà la frase giusta
di riverberi, da usare

come una lama, come una decisione

nel groviglio, nel tumulto:
appena ripensando

a un affarino vegetale che profuma
di pomi e di carrube, o le formiche
in pista sul davanzale della metropo-

li e una faccia nostrana alla finestra,
le braccia assai lunghe, e di lontano,
solo tra cielo e cielo, il ciel che sfuma,

un strido di tolle e di gavette:

pensando così a delle secche
pitture per indigeni o croati, e acqua
per dopo, acqua per sempre;

e un temporale non scabroso, rozzo,
candido e immobile, silenzioso
e senza vento, dell'autentico

colore dell'acqua in fondo al pozzo,
per i figli della legge, bei figlioli
di sentenza varia e panni scarsi.

But, before the wind

But, before the wind,
before the wind falls
in the long run, spread out,

the verbs barely conjugated, and moans,
endeavors, and errands and canons,
and the value of life,

are the seeds warmed in the fingers
of a single hand, of a quick
tongue, of a new language;

and the geminate or simple roots¹
in the submerged clouds
of conversation, for a century

at least! And are you ready
not to know, to negate,
to pronounce absurd sayings,

such as: "*Credo quia...*"?²
"I believe it's time to leave,"
"I believe that all," and "I think that"?

And before it comes
before the shadow of beauty
clouds the modern continents,

and before it's too
late, and someone
knocks at the door, or the phone

rings to interrupt us,
let's all do something together:
hope isn't over, it's beginning:

that thing at the peak of things
will suggest the phrase with
the right echoes, to be used

as a blade, as a decision
in the tangle, in the uproar:
barely thinking again

of a little vegetable contraption scented
with apples and carobs, or ants in line
on the windowsill of the metropo-

lis and a local face at the window,
arms extremely long, and far off,
alone amid sky and sky, the sky fading,

a shriek of tin-cans and mess-tins:

thus thinking of dry
paints for natives or Croatians, and water
for later, water forever;

and a storm not scabrous, raw,
candid and still, silent
and windless, of the true

color of water at the bottom of the well,
for the sons of the law, beautiful sons
of different sentences and shabby clothes.

¹ By breaking these words, Villa calls attention to the phonetic similarities between *gemi-ti* (moans) and *gemi-nate* (geminates), as well as with *semi* (seeds). The phonetic game at play in the Italian cannot be reproduced in English.

² Latin for *I believe because the fact is that...*, as in Dante's "*State contenti, umana gente, al quia*" [Mortals, remain contented at the quia] (Purgatorio, Canto 111, 47).

Semper pauperes

*Semper pauperes vobiscum habebitis,
sed me non semper habebitis.
S. Matteo*

Già da lontano breda, già da tempo, con l'indice levato
a tramontana, quel medesimo che uccise sulla scorza
del gelso due formiche in assolute faccende,
con l'indice levato noi segnammo, per prudenza,
per un vago bisogno di ricordi e per la forza
stessa del semplice pensare, quella casa
che da lontana chiama e ci sospira, così piena
ancora di romantici sentimenti, e del profumo
di defunti che neppure in lontananza vorrebbero scommettere
la verità dei nostri connotati, la giustizia dei nostri documenti,
altri liquori d'ombre e di figure travasando,
non già le nostre, stanche e provvisorie nell'agire,
come una pianta senza nome, di nessuno, senza categoria
plausibile al sorteggio dei suoi temporali,
dove anche i passeri, anche i passeri, e perfino
i passeri, perfino gli uccelletti, orbi nel fumo
della mente e privi di un governo autoritario,
fondano nel volo senza scampo, senza gradi, l'arco
della notte ventura in un osanna, sempre al divario
d'una sorte continua che li scava; e poi sparire.

E adesso quei rondoni, tuttavia, io mi domando,
quando gli autunni cominciano la marcia, come reggimenti
ravvolti nei pastrani sugli asfalti leggeri,
dal San Gottardo, avranno tuttavia
i loro cari defunti disegnati sulle foglie del cielo?

Scapole d'un giovanotto
nell'azzurro solitario,
nel cielo le giornate
son più lente degli uccelli,
orbi nella mente di sale.

Ma poi la rondine ritorna ad infierire:
non muta la sorte delle foglie, tale
che in altro largo serbi un'espèride preclusa
ai censimenti, stanze di pomice, lucenti
ghiaie ebbre, nel suono dei palazzi viola;
che in altro largo serbi un continente
come l'ala d'un aprile a banderuola,
senza mercati alla pianura di Saronno, e piova,
povero, i mantelli, le lenzuola, le mutande,
le formiche e i lampioni agonizzando; e poi sparire.

Semper Pauperes

*Semper pauperes vobiscum habebitis,
sed me non semper habebitis.
St. Matthew¹*

Already *bredda*² from afar, already for a while, with index raised
to the north, the same one who killed two ants
in absolute affairs on the bark of the mulberry tree,
with index raised we pointed, out of prudence,
out of a vague need for memories and out of the very
power of simply thinking, to that house
calling from afar and sighing for us, still so
full of romantic feelings, and the fragrance
of the deceased who not even from afar would bet on
the truth of our features, the justice of our papers,
decanting other liquors made of shades and figures,
certainly not ours, tired and temporary in action,
like a nameless plant, nobody's, without a plausible
category in the draw of its storms,
where sparrows too, sparrows too, and even
sparrows, even the little birds, blind in the smoke
of the mind and devoid of an authoritarian government,
establish in their flight with no escape, without degrees, the arch
of the coming night in hosanna, always on the brink
of a continuous fate that digs them out; and then vanish.

And now those swallows, still, I wonder,
when autumns begin to march, like regiments
wrapped in greatcoats on light asphalts,
from the San Gottardo pass, will they still have
their dear deceased drawn on the leaves of the sky?

Shoulder blades of a young man
in the solitary blue,

in the sky the days
are slower than birds,
blind in the mind of salt.

But then the swallow returns to rage:
the fate of leaves does not change, one
that in another clearing excludes a hesperides
from the census, rooms of pumice, shiny
inebriated gravel, in the sound of purple buildings;
that in another clearing holds a continent
like the wing of a weathervane April,
without markets on the plain of Saronno,³ and rains,
poor thing, the cloaks, the sheets, the underwear,
the ants and the streetlamps agonizing; and then vanish.

¹ Matthew 26:11 “For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always” (King James Version). Villa later crossed out the poem’s incipit in his copy.

² See note #17 on page 170.

³ *Saronno* is a commune of the Lombard region.

Buonasera

In fondo a una giornata corrosa per i chiasmi
e tormentata per i crepacuori, per puntigli vani,
per i cari fantasmi dei pani, dei soldi, della faccia,
e per gli allarmi falsi, e per i primi
numeri che certo appariranno
al di là degli ultimi, per tutto
che ci tuffa giorno e giorno, da mattina
a sera in lei, la meraviglia, il lotto, la caccia,

si ricordano degli stradoni, un po’ perduti
in mezzo alla giovane rugiada,
i miei stivali impaltati sulla terra terrena,
ove un telefono osi dalla patria superna
di tenermi a bada, e darmi lena; e mi riporti
in una cadenza milanese o madrilenà, una rada
“buonasera”, l’onda alterna, l’illimito
sgomento, gli orgogli dell’affetto e il sentimento
dei cugini vivi: con loro, prima di prendere sonno,
scommettere una per una le faccende trasognate
dei pani dei soldi della faccia: la parentela
sola è il lavoro di tutte le giornate, in tutto pari
all’invisibile salario: e le generazioni, casa per casa...

Ma ormai son grande, e quasi un uomo, e vario: e qui
pensa di scrivere un romanzo un po’ lontano,

pensa a un temporale che cadesse sugli omeri
pianino o su robinie nude di fianco agli stradoni,
e poi pulsava il tuono in gola alle livide serate
come lo squarcio in cui ognuno sogna di avere un sonno tremendo
con insalata cruda e nebbia e le robinie
e tutto. Allora probabilmente tu sospetti che la terra
è un albergo in disordine che ci aspetti noi
e clienti di riguardo per avventura ritornati
adagio indietro, in punta di piedi.

Good Evening¹

At the end of a day corroded by chiasms
and tormented by heartbreaks, by vain piques
by the dear phantoms of bread, money, the face,
and by false alarms, and by the first
numbers that will surely appear
beyond the last, by everything
that dips us day after day, from morning
till night into her, the wonderment, the lottery, the hunt,

highways² remembered, somewhat lost
in the midst of youthful dew,
my muddy boots stiff on the earthly earth,
where a telephone from the supernal fatherland
dares to keep me at bay, to invigorate me; and it takes me
back to a Milanese or Madrilenian cadence, a sparse
“good evening,” the alternating wave, the endless
dismay, affection’s prides and the feeling
of cousins alive: with them, before falling asleep,
waging one by one dreamy endeavors
of breads money face: kinship
alone is the work of everyday, one with
the invisible salary: and the generations, door to door...

But now I’m grown, and almost a man, and varied: and here
he thinks of writing a somewhat distant novel,
he thinks about a storm slowly falling on shoulders
or on naked locus trees lining the roads, and
then the thunder throbbed in the throats of livid evenings
like the gash where everyone dreams of being terribly sleepy
with raw salad and fog and the locus trees
and everything. That’s when you might suspect that the earth
is a hotel in disarray waiting for us all
and an esteemed clientele that wound up coming
back slowly, on the tip of their toes.

¹ Villa later crossed out the entire poem in his copy.

² *Stradoni* in the original literally means “big roads,” which lead into the surrounding countryside.

Gli argomenti

A dar la baia, o condannare
in aperto giudizio, all’aperto,
le piante, segate a filo

di catrame, la forza malinconica
del marciapiede inaffiato,
il disonore e il diritto del portello

dove stride la città
con cose da fare, e con vago
bagliore di rame

che è il primo serenare
e l’ultimo navigare
nel quintino trepilante

di squinzano col frego della tacca.

Tutte le tribù cadute
al di là della spalletta, dentro il fiume
per alzare il livello dell’acqua,

per saggiarne la fisica
profondità, per naufragare,
per patire e maturare,

alzando le mani,
sforzando la fronte,
fregandosi la ciska,

amor di pietra amore
di pietra antelucana
e di facciate stralunghe,

con la vita sana,
con la vista vispa,
il primo serenare

e l’ultimo navigare,
quaggiù, lassù, le nuvole
docili, mansuete, come mosche,

italiarde, tosche, lombane...

ardi abbastanza, così,
vena povera, consigliata
nella vera amarezza?

Arguments

To poke fun, or condemn
in open judgment, in the open,
the plants, sawn at the tar

mark, the melancholic force
of the watered sidewalk,
the hatchway's dishonor and right

where the city screeches
with things to do, and with vague
copper glare

that's the first clearing up
and the last sailing
in the shaking fifth

of squinzano with a notch mark.¹

All the tribes fallen
beyond the embankment, in the river
to raise the water's level,

to test its physical
depth, to shipwreck,
to suffer and mature,

raising hands,
straining brow,
rubbing rheum,

love of stone love
of antelucan stone
of extra long façades,

with sane life,
with spry sight,
the first clearing up

and the last sailing,
down here, up there, the docile
clouds, gentle, as flies,
italiard, toscard, lomban...²

so do you burn enough,
poor vein, counseled
in true bitterness?

¹ *Squinzano* is a type of red wine produced in the southern region of Puglia. The “notch mark” refers to a line on the bottle to measure the liquid quantity within it.

² A mixing of the three adjectives *Italian*, *Tuscan*, and *Lombard*.

A volte un lampo (traduzione)

A volte, un lampo...

Siamo dei morti che non sanno
persuadersi d'essere morti,
sempre nascosti dietro i portoni delle case:
come ladri, in fondo, dietro la porta
della felicità (ma coi lacci
delle scarpe slacciati), col naso in su, e aspetta
che torni un'occasione propizia. Beh, lasciamo andare,
ma smetti di sputacchiare sui muri.

A volte, un lampo...

Parlare, parlare di cenere, di rugiada, parlare
cogli occhi chiusi, colle labbra che chiacchierano
da sole, automaticamente, senza volere, parlare
è come dire: “nulla. Pazienza. Così sia.
Noi ci vedremo ancora, non temere.”
Ma poi mi torna la malinconia, come uno stupido,
e torno indietro di scatto, corro a casa
per paura che mio figlio nella culla
abbia preso fuoco.

Lasciatemi allungare una mano, ragazze, lasciatemi
allungare: la vita è un valzer; un temporale.

A volte, un lampo...

*Every So Often a Flash (Translation)*¹

Every so often, a flash...

We are dead who can't
persuade themselves they're dead,
always hidden behind the main entrance:
like thieves, in the back, behind the door
of happiness (but with laces
untied), with nose in the air, and wait
for the right moment to return. Well, never mind,
but stop spitting on walls.

Every so often, a flash...

Speaking, speaking of ashes, of dew, speaking
with eyes closed, with lips that blabber
on their own, automatically, unwittingly, speaking
is like saying: "nothing. Relax. So be it.
We'll see each other again, don't worry."
But then my melancholy returns, like an idiot,
and I dart back, run home
out of fear that my son in his crib
has caught fire.

Let me cop a feel, girls, let me
cop: life is a waltz; a storm.

Every so often, a flash...

¹ Villa later crossed out both the original Milanese as well as his Italian translation in his copy.

Natus de muliere, brevi vivens

L'uomo in natura senza dubbio
fu inventato come un grido
a bruciapelo: odio,

ira, indumenti; propagato
nella apparenza, o febbre
universale: nato a sentire

legge e fede, nato di donna
per mangiare la foglia, per contarla
lunga, per contarla corta,

manda giù quanto più può

saliva; nato di donna
per mangiar la foglia, parla e vuole

maniere d'ogni sorta,
secco il corame delle suole,
fa digrignare i denti; agisce

azioni chimiche, cose
che son lecite o non sono, a voglia,
oneste che fan gran figura, o diso-

nore: commerciali, generose,
che fregano il prossimo, e consumano
i desideri e la freschezza al viso;

che non arrivano a niente, fredde
che mettono i brividi; servili
che umiliano serviti e servitori;

pubbliche, che son strapazzi
mica tanto lievi, che molta
opera chiedono, e non cuore,

finalmente!; nato di donna,
sacramenta e fa i suoi fatti, scaltro
o no, igienici o immortali; s'arrangia,

legge nei cuori, negli occhi,
nelle pietre, nei giornali,
e, appena può, muore; mangia,

costruisce sentimentali agglomerati
sugli elenchi telefonici, sbatte
quadrelli uno in pigna all'altro,

i quadrelli rossi, che mangiano
calcina, difendono gli arti
e le giunture dai colpi d'aria,

e va bene
ma non possono parlare
come né i fiori, come né i denti:

fare l'uomo non è che una
maniera come un'altra
per scamparla bella:

uomo, nessuno non gli dà mai ragione,
e né la ragione e né il torto,
e né la legge e né la fede;

e allora gareggia: azioni
che non può sapere né volere,
misura, vende, crede, tribola

e non ottiene: sarà cibo
al morbus novus, esca
ai batteri più sicuri: perché

perché la salma è stretta; l'aria tira
forte, e via con essa l'alma
sfugge, temeraria, vile,

forte presa dal piacere
nazionale: e forse è

che forse qui bisogna cambiar aria
tutti quanti: è un consiglio,
un argomento decisivo.

*Natus de muliere, brevi vivens*¹

Man in nature without a doubt
was invented like a point-blank
scream: hate,

wrath, garments; propagated
in the appearance, or universal
fever: born to hear

law and faith, born of woman
to get wise², to make it
long, to make it short,

gulps down as much saliva as
he can; born of woman
to get wise, speaks and wants

manners of every sort,
dry the leather soles,
makes teeth gnash; carries out

chemical actions, things
that are permissible or aren't, perhaps,
honest that make a great impression, or

dishonor: commercial, generous,
that swindle the next man, and consume
desires and freshness from the face;

that never accomplish anything, so cold
they bring chills; so servile
they humble served and servants;

public, that are self-abusers
serious ones at that, asking
for much care, and not heart,

finally!; born of woman,
he curses and minds his business, shrewd
or not, hygienic or immortal; he makes do,

reads in hearts, in eyes
in stones, in newspapers,
and, as soon as possible, dies; eats,

builds sentimental agglomerations
on telephone books, slams
tiles one on top of the other,

the red tiles, that eat
mortar, defend the limbs
and joints from drafts,

and that's okay
but they can't speak
neither like flowers, nor teeth:
to act as a man is nothing but a
manner like any other
to come out alive:

man, nobody ever agrees with him,
neither right, nor wrong,
neither law, nor faith;

and so he competes: actions
he doesn't know nor desire,
he measures, sells, believes, suffers

and never obtains: food
for the morbus novus³, bait
for the inevitable bacterium: why

because the body is tight; the air blows
hard, and with it the soul
escapes, reckless, vile,

clutched by national
pleasure: and maybe it's that

just maybe here we need a change of scenery,
everybody: it's just a suggestion,
a conclusive argument.

¹ From the book of Job (14, 1: "Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis" – Man *that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*), a translation of which Villa published in 1947 (see bibliography). He later crossed out the entire poem in his copy.

² In the original *mangiare la foglia* literally means to "eat the leaf."

³ Latin for *new disease*.

Per miracolo

Così, per uno scarto, per miracolo, anche il sasso
vibrava come un'aria, come un bioccolo, e con passo
carico, nuvole di fosforo avariavano per via
lo splendore di balsamo nel suffragio gelato dell'ombria.

Allora, amanti senza volto e senza fame, con il fiato
allora sottovoce si diceva, ci dicevamo: "fu il peccato
a renderci immortali, fu il peccato! Che egoisti,
poi" E le nostre occhiaie – una finestra – così tristi

furono come il merlo che non spicca il suo balzo da pannocchia.
Noi non siamo mai stati più antichi delle nostre ginocchia,
ove adagiammo al tramonto le palme, perché vana
al vento, giubilando, non s'alzasse la tua sottana

con la sottanina, audace velo.

A miracle¹

Like that, swerving, a miracle, even the stone
vibrated like an aria, like a tuft, and with laden
steps, clouds of phosphorus rotted through
the splendor of balsam in the frozen suffrage of shade.

So, lovers without faces, without hunger, with soft
breath it was said, we told each other: “it was the sin
that made us immortal, it was the sin! How selfish
of us” And our eye sockets – a window – so sad

were like a blackbird that never leaps from the ear.
We’ve never been more ancient than our knees,
where we laid down palms at sunset, so that, in
jubilation, in the wind, your skirt wasn’t lifted in

vein, along with your slip, taunting veil.

¹ Also entirely crossed in Villa’s copy.

Ormai

Un giorno la giovinezza, con circospezione
abbandona arbitrariamente i capolinea. Ecco.
E io ricordo le finestre che s’accendono al pianterreno
sul vialone, e somigliano così profondamente ai radi
ragionamenti che faremo sul punto di morire,
in articulo, con l’ombra degli amici, a fior di mente.

Invero

non so più se viva tra le secche
ancora il suo tepido serpire, adesso,
in province gelate, come una romanza
fine e perenne sul filo della schiena, ma davvero
so che nelle lacrime lombarde, ove credemmo
di mieterci a vicenda, vagabondi baleni
dissipavano i veli nuziali alle riviere.

Ed era un nome d’alta Italia, a ripensare bene,
era un nome questa raffica, che non osi
più inseguire? E la felicità dell’occidente
si salva in occidente?

Disabitate ormai le alzaie, e disperando
ormai del nostro sentimento (e la nebbia
ormai mietuta che ci stringe a mezza vita),
disabitate le alzaie e disperando ormai,
se la patria fosse una cittadinanza unica, reale,
andrebbe ricordata in un risucchio, a capofitto
per le celesti aiuole, la parte più dimessa
del nostro pensare lontanamente: andrebbe
ricordato uno spesso passaggio di brumisti

e di taxi, quel che tossisce sul margine caduco
del Naviglio, o libero tra le pioppe luccicanti
che i diti del vento tamburellano lassù, il brivido
dell'ultimo brum, in una corsa matta, che ci porta
via tutti i fanali e il nostro cuore salutando.

By Now¹

One day youth, with circumspection
arbitrarily abandons the end of the line. That's it.
And I remember the windows that light up at ground level
on the boulevard, and they so closely resemble the rare
reasoning we'll exchange on the brink of death,
*in articulo*¹, with shades of friends, skimming the mind.

In truth

I no longer know if her warm slither
still lives in the shallows, now,
in frozen provinces, like a subtle
melody lasting down the back, but I really
know that in Lombard tears, where we thought
we reaped each other, vagabond flashes
dispelled the nuptial veils along the shores.

Was it a name for this northern Italy, to think again,
was this flurry a name, that you no longer
dare to pursue? Was it the happiness of the West
safe in the West?

Towpaths by now uninhabited, and despairing
by now of our feeling (and reaped
by now the fog that clenches our waste),
towpaths uninhabited and by now despairing,
if the fatherland were one real citizenship alone
it should be remembered in a whirlpool, headlong
across celestial flowerbeds, the most demure part
of our thinking distantly: it should be remembered
the frequent passing of coachmen and taxis, that
coughing on the ephemeral margin of the
Naviglio, or free among the shining poplars
that the wind's fingers drum up there, the shiver
of the last coach, in a crazy race, that whisks
away all our lamps and hearts³, waving.

¹ Originally dated 1939, Villa changed it to 1932 in his copy.

² Latin for *at the moment of*... Villa is playing with the expression *in articulo mortis* (at the moment of death).

³ Villa crossed out *il nostro cuore* in his copy.

E ma dopo / Yeah but after

E ma dopo

Dopo il dopo è dopo
dopo cenato la tempesta
dopo agonizzato l'eliotropo e chini
in giù gli stami, dopo la festa
i rasoi sul davanzale deposti in quanto il sangue
dai solchi epidermici fuoresce

dopo che uno mesce, Gerolamo mi sposi,
dopo i fuochi odorosi, Gerolamo se m'ami odi che
strisciano sull'etra gli ombelichi delle quaglie,

dopo strizzati i fichi le dalie gli epitellii,
e i pochi colpi dei dadi sulla tavola dei fenomeni,
dopo incenerite ceneri serene di chimere rapsodiche,
dopo nell'etra salubre tra i rami captate
le essenze degli huomeni e sconcertati
i radi bocconi di Bohême, e
cancellate le esalazioni da lavanderia da cracking
da zolfo

e dopo molate le punte alle canne di bambù
al becco dell'assiolo e del cucù
e dopo

liquefatte le acque per tutti i lunghi atrii del golfo,
il crogiuolo delle ombrie radiofoniche
struggendo e coniugata
la mente con lo spettro
mente coniugata in un promiscuo impulso
al casto volo
e spirito omogeneo
spirito serenante

fotogenica giunse la notte e più remoto l'altro,
il tramite assoluto, il scatto
per dove risalgono le triglie diagonali
le triglie alle radici altre del vento
sperperato

e dopo asciugato i calcagni le caviglie i nomi
e traversati gli aromi dei mosti nelle recondite atmosfere
dei cisterni, e dopo regolato i lombrichi e uniti

i perni e le cerniere,

dopo estirpato i massimi e i minimi, presunti,
e calcolato il tenore acido dei gliceridi nelle azalee

i costi sul calmiere

dopo calibrato gli idiomi
nel rivoluzionario trepestio su e giù per le scalee
dell'acropoli dove uno dice dormendo: "che diavolo!"
e un altro dopo dice: "che vogliamo morire, allora,
così in camicia?"

e i treni non arrivano puntuali
"e non c'è più ragione d'essere!"
"carogna!"
e "mi stuzzica il calcagno" e
"va alla fogna" e e
"eh, già" "gli ultimi saranno i primi

a morire" e Orlando di Lasso con la musica
a punteruolo e pazienza graduata
tenta forzare la porta alla confluenza delle raffiche
sublime.

E dopo il dopo è allora
(è ancora) (di già?)
e dunque allora in un commiato inverosimile,
futuri e paralleli
al corso degli anni e all'ultimissima
analisi delle coniche solari e della polvere,
affini al tuono, alle più labili analogie
razionali, al tema bustrofedico,

defluiscono i veli mitografi dalle superfici moltiplicate.

Yeah But After

After the after is after
after dinner the storm
after agony the heliotrope and bending
the stamens, after the party
razors laid on the windowsill because blood
seeps from epidermal furrows

after pouring out, Gerolamo marry me,
after the fragrant fires, Gerolamo if you love me listen

to the navels of quails slithering across the air,

after squeezing figs dahlias and epitheliums,
and a few rolls of dice across the table of phenomena,
after incinerating the serene ashes of rhapsodic chimeras,
after receiving the essence of men among branches
in the healthy air and baffling
the rare mouthfuls of Boheme, and
erasing the exhalations from laundry from cracking
from sulfur

and after sharpening the tip of reeds of bamboo
in beaks of the owl and the cuckoo
and after

liquefying the waters along all the atriums of the gulf,
the crucible of radiophonic shades
haunting and conjugated
the mind with the specter
mind conjugated in a promiscuous impulse
in the chaste flight
and homogeneous spirit
calming spirit

photogenic came the night and more remote the other,
the absolute passage, the sprint
through which diagonal mullets swim up
mulletts at the alien roots of squandered
wind

and after drying the heels ankles and names
and traversing the smells of musts in the remote atmospheres
of cisterns, and after regulating earthworms and uniting
pins and hinges,

after eradicating presumed minimums and maximums
and calculating the acid tenor of glycerides in the azaleas

the costs to be curbed

after calibrating idioms
in the revolutionary shuffle up and down the stairwells
of the acropolis where someone says sleeping: "what the hell!"
and after another says: "are we going to die like this,
in our shirt sleeves?"
and the trains don't arrive on time

“and there’s no reason for it!”
“you rat!”
and “it tickles my heel” and
“back to the sewer” and and

“yeah, right” “the last shall be the first

to die” and Orlando di Lasso with bodkin
music and balanced patience
tries to force the door to the confluence of sublime
bursts.

And after the after is then
(is again) (already?)
and therefore then in an unlikely parting,
future and parallel
to the passing of time and to the very last
analysis of solar conics and dust,
akin to thunder, to the most transient rational
analogies, to the boustrophedon theme,

from multiplied surfaces the mythographic veils drain away.

Luogo e impulso

Metà idea e metà frutto
metà rischio metà fame
metà intero metà tutto
metà morte metà pane

Metà effigie e metà spazio
metà corpo e metà ombra
metà morbo metà strazio
metà asciutto metà fiume

Metà pesce e metà testa
metà sasso e metà lume
metà mano metà leva
metà corre metà resta

Metà troppo metà poco
metà vita metà cosa
metà gesto metà scopo
metà fuoco metà rosa

Metà piombo metà voce

metà riso metà vento
metà statua metà sasso
metà calma metà accento

Place and Impulse¹

Half idea and half fruit
half risk half desire
half whole half absolute
half bread half expire

Half space and half effigy
half body and half shade
half torment half malady
half dry half cascade
Half head and half fish
half stone and half light
half hand half switch
half rest half flight

Half scarce half rife
half gesture half aim
half thing half life
half rose half flame

Half led half *vox*
half laughter half vent
half statute half rocks
half calm half accent

¹ A few liberties have been taken to maintain the rhyme scheme found in the original. For example, *vox* replaces the original “voce” to rhyme with *rocks*.

Astronomia

Udito per caso sibilare la gran lancia viola nella ionosfera?

poi transita di qui e sobrie aree
dirama dai remoti seni e questo
è questo il tuo parlare a trama
questo essendo

l'opinione l'opera il respiro: non accorgersi confondere le acque

etimi leggendari omologare nel suono
di pietra pietra e nella conca alma
del sinistro (piede a mano, ma sinistro)

senza armonia
il punto emblema

della freccia disgiunta dallo sforzo
con impulso decrescente, verso il lacero

Una temperatura delira sulle palpebre della catalisi
cieca, un pensiero moderno avulso a un macero patema
nel confuso segreto
che parole!

che il primo salto
che il grido acutamente
articolato nell'indice ialino
nei tendini
nei pori
nel pane
nell'aceto
nel coke
nell'aria
di cobalto, e *che* i furori delle consonanti spettrali!

nell'enfasi varia del teorema insoddisfatto
nell'interiezione
nella fine combustione
nella tensione libera
nell'intreccio dei vimini
nell'apotema
nei pori dell'antracite e nello schianto

del ghiaccio cui incrina la lama di una primavera
indimenticabile!

Without Harmony

The dark point of being the being of being
of growing of rising: and to burn and segregate
without pity
without harmony
the emblematic tip

of the arrow separated from the effort
with waning impulse, toward the tear

A delirious temperature on the eyelids of the blind
catalysis, a modern thought ripped from macerated anxiety

in the confused secret
what words!

that the first leap
that the scream acutely
articulated in the hyaline index
in the tendons
in the pores
in the bread
in the vinegar
in the coke¹
in the air
of cobalt, and *that* the furies of the spectral consonants!

in the various emphasis of the unsatisfied theorem
in the interjection
in the subtle combustion
in the free tension
in the tangle of wicker
in the apothem
in the pores of anthracite and in the cracking

of the glacier that crazes the blade of an unforgettable
Spring!

¹ The reference is unclear. Given the time in which Villa composed the poem, it is very unlikely he speaking of the nickname for “Coca-Cola.”

Linguistica

Non c'è più origini. Né. Né si può sapere se.
Se furono le origini e nemmeno.
E nemmeno c'è ragione che nascano
le origini Né più
la fede, idolo di Amorgos!
chi dici origina le origini nel tocco nell'accento
nel sogno mortale del necessario?
No, non c'è più origini. No.
Ma
il transito provocato delle idee antiche – e degli impulsi.
E qualsivoglia ambiguo che germogli intatto
dalle relazioni
dalle traiettorie
dalle radiazioni
dalle concezioni

luogo senza storie.

Luogo dove tutti.
E dove la coscienza.
E dove il dove.

Per conoscere l'incommensurabile semenza delle vertigini adombrate

le giunture schioccate nei legami
la trasparenza delle cartilagini
il cieco sgomento dei fogliami

agricoli nelle forze
esteriori, e l'analisi fonda
incisa nel corpo dell'accento.

Non c'è più. Né origini nei rami. No.
né non origini.

Chi arrestava i sintagmi sazi nel sortilegio della consistenza
usava lo spirito senza rimedio nel momento indecisivo
come un compasso disadatto, non esperto, così non si poteva
agire più niente, più, ombra ferita e riferita, proiezione
senza essenza, così che speculare sul comune tedio
un gioco parve, e ogni attimo-fonema
ancora oggi sfiora guerra e tempo consumato, e il peso
corrompe dell'ombra dei tramiti dell'essenza.

E codesta sarebbe. Questa la fine concepibile:
se attraverso l'idea massima del pericolo e dell'indistinto
si curva l'anima estrema nell'attrito di idrogeno e ozono e i giorni
acerbi sommano giorni ai giorni quotidiani nell'araldica
prosodia delle tangenze,
soffocando ogni flusso di infallibile irrealtà in:
 i verbi
 i neologismi.

Chi le braccia levava sazi di viole nel palpito assortito
oggi paragona ogni rovina paragona allo spirito
immune che popola e corruga a segmenti il nembo
delle testimonianze storiche, delle parabole nel grembo
confuso delle parrocchie e nelle larghe zone
di caccia e pesca e d'altre energiche mansioni culturali.

E non per questo celebro coscientemente il germe
 sepolto, al di là,
e celebro l'etimo corroso dalle iridi foniche,
 l'etimo immaturo,

l'etimo colto,
l'etimo negli spazi avariati,
nei minimi intervalli,
nelle congiunzioni,
l'etimo della solitudine posseduta,
l'etimo nella sete
e nella sete idonea alle fossili rocce illuminate
dalle fosforescenze idumee, idolo di Amorgos!

Linguistics

There's no more origins. Nor. Nor does one know if.
If they were origins and not even.
And not even a reason why origins
are born Nor any longer
faith, idol of Amorgos!¹
who do you say originates origins in the touch in the accent
in the mortal dream of the necessary?
No, there's no more origins. No.
But

the provoked transit of ancient ideas – and impulses.
And any ambiguity that sprouts intact
from relations
from trajectories
from radiations
from conceptions

place without stories.
Place where everyone.
And where the conscious.
And where the where.

To recognize the incommensurable seeding of foreshadowed vertigo

the joints shocked in ties
the transparency of cartilage
the blind dismay of foliage

agricultures in external
forces, and the deep analysis
carved on the body of accent.

No.
There's no more. Nor origins in the branches. nor non origins.

Those who arrested satiated syntagms in the spell of consistency

used the spirit without remedy in the indecisive moment
like an unsuited compass, inexperienced, so nothing could be
acted any longer, any, wounded and re-wounded shade, projection
without essence, so that speculating on common boredom
looked like a game, and every moment-phoneme
today still verges on war and consumed time, and the weight
corrupts some shade some passings some essence.

And this would be. This the conceivable end:
if through the maximum idea of the indistinct and danger
the extreme soul is curved in the clash of hydrogen and ozone and the
bitter days add days to everyday days in the heraldic
prosody of tangencies,
smothering every flux of infallible unreality in:
verbs
neologisms.

Those who lifted arms satiated with violets in the assorted palpitation
today compare every ruin compare to the immune
spirit that populates and furrows in segments the nimbus
of historical testimonies, of parables in the confused
womb of parishes and in the large areas
for hunting and fishing and other energetic cultural tasks.

And this isn't why I consciously celebrate the seed
buried, on the other side,
and celebrate the corrosive etymon from phonic irises,
the immature etymon,
the erudite etymon,
the etymon in rotten spaces,
in the shortest intervals,
in conjunctions,
the etymon of possessed solitude,
the etymon in the thirst
and in the thirst suited to fossil rocks illuminated
by Idumean² phosphorescence, idol of Amorgos!

¹ Part of Cycladic art (c. 3000 – 1500 BC), the *idol of Amorgos* is a stylized human form about a meter and a half in height, typically carved out of a hard stone. These are some of the earliest known examples of sculpture and therefore represent the “origins” of Western art. Since these figures belong to a mythical past, it is unclear what sort of function they held, if they were created as forms of worship or simply out of early man’s aesthetic sensibility.

² In Hellenistic- Roman geography, the adjective *Idumean* referred to a region of southern Palestine inhabited by the Edomites, descendants of the biblical figure Esau.

Geografia

Sconfina, forma reale, nella balugine arsa delle chiome
inanimate! eludi il nome! penetra

il nesso fantastico delle matematiche particolari: e sparsa
furia di là là dove la tempesta

musica nidiate di appennini e i verecondi

nerbi delle foci essenziali
e dei congegni librati a larghi schemi nell'anello

continentale e dei coefficienti
di vili radici, percettibili

appena nella sinossi fiorita, e il sesso stralunato delle pleiadi,
gentili narici sottovoce.

Geography

Trespass, real form, in the burnt glimmer of inanimate
locks! elude the name! penetrate

the fantastic nexus of particular mathematics: and scattered
fury over there there where the storm sets

to music broods of apennines and the chaste

backbones of essential estuaries
and of devices hovering in large patterns in the continental

ring and of the coefficients
of vile roots, barely

visible in the blossoming synopsis, and the bewildered sex of the Pleiades,
gentle nostrils sotto voce.

Le parole

Una stagionaccia di tumescenti avvoltoi,
svignate le mogli per mancanza di cibarie di scandali di orgasmi
e d'altre storie, toccherà dimenticare con indifferenza, e con sentita
espressione, i campi spremuti dagli amici intimi, i terreni
recinti, i verdi trapezi con i lampi pomeridiani, i tiepidi
screzi della primavera nazionale dietro i terrapieni, e le fontane

occulte del sapere grano a grano le similitudini dei fiori
dei venti dei trafegli nei luoghi non segnati, e le settimane
che nei chiasmi risorge la carne unanime-inanime nei chiasmi

e massacrare il gallo forbito tra i brughii lombardi
il gesto che trafughi alla notte il sangue fresco gli alberi e le alte
quote degli astri vanitosi, e la polare cha valica i sentieri
delle ascisse, e rispingere proprio così

contro i drastici orizzonti frantumati dai tamburi i candidi fantasmi
e sfogliare le direzioni ortogonali e nelle vuote
sfere annusare le ferraglie tra le rose paniche e il sentore
di rugiada dai poderi avversi e il crudo
raziocinio delle millesime angolature divelte nel guizzo delle trote,
le cuspidi sonore degli shrapnell e il cielo nudo

lento delle azalee,
vero che tu vedevi nel liquore dell'atlantico con gli occhi
della vita intera, e concepivi le termiche metafore
e le ipotesi grandi ottemperare alle medesime
cause influenti delle maree, e delle volte
climatiche che accadono nello sperma degli squali bianchi?

quindi in un impeto unanime bevemmo in coro
gli insieme, e uno per uno il soffio amato della sola inquietudine
che rapinava l'ombra e decimava i fatui
semi delle consuetudini verbali, i risplendenti
rameggi dell'uranio e il vero ulivo
d'oro nella più cheta tenebra del quarzo, e il fiume

vivo delle arterie che risale il lume-lavoro degli scheletri.

Words

A nasty season of tumescent vultures,
wives ran off for lack of food of scandals of orgasms
and other stories, must be forgotten with indifference, and the sincere
expression, the fields squeezed by intimate friends, the fenced in
terrains, the green trapezia with afternoon flashes, the tepid
palate of the national spring behind the landfills, and the secret
fountains of knowledge bead by bead the similes with flowers
and winds and heavy breadths in unmarked places, and the weeks
that in the chasms the flesh resurfaces unanimous-inanimate in the chasms

and slaughtering the well-mannered rooster among Lombard heathers
the gesture smuggling from the night the fresh blood the trees and the high

altitudes of vein stars, and Polaris that crosses the paths
of abscissas, and to push back just like that

against the drastic horizons shattered by the drums the candid ghosts
and to leaf the orthogonal directions and in the empty
spheres to sniff the iron scraps among the panicky roses and the sensation
of dew from adverse farms and the crude
reasoning of the thousandth slant wrecked in the darting of trout,
the sonorous cuspid of shrapnel and the nude slow

sky of azaleas,
true that you saw in the liquor of the Atlantic with eyes
of the entire life, and you conceived of thermal metaphors
and the great hypothesis complying with the same
influential causes of the tides, and the climatic
vaults taking shape in the sperm of great white sharks?

then in a unanimous thrust we drank the sets
chorally, and one by one the beloved breadth of the only restlessness
that robbed the shade and decimated the fatuous
seeds of verbal habits, the resplendent branches
of uranium and the true golden olive
tree in the calmest darkness of quartz, and the living

river of arteries that flows along the taper-work of skeletons.

Dinamica accanita

A mente formuliamo una dinamica
accanita: il carro con le cinque ruote
oblique nel senso periodico
dei punti cardinali sulle dita della mano usuale.

E se tu vedi adagio salire per la china storta
questa grande ruota morte, bene, séguila
pari pari, e giunto in alto sui ripiani panoramici

e tu ruba dalle matte arene del silenzio geloso
nell'ora che la porta litargica, gl'illimiti
itinerari e spazi vulnerabili recuperando, sbatte
sullo stipite e nel cardine di sale

cigola accanitamente, quel che alla terra torna
misurato compenso e quota infera
ideale: ruba

corni gentili di sangue congolese, e la luna
inviperita sulle cateratte.

Stubborn Dynamics

In our minds we formulate stubborn
dynamics: the cart with five oblique
wheels in the periodic sense of
cardinal points on the fingers of the usual hand.

And if you see this great death wheel slowly
climb the crooked slope, good, follow it
inch by inch, and once you've reached the panoramic plateaus

steal some from mad arenas of jealous silence
when the lethargic door, recuperating
unlimited itineraries and vulnerable spaces, slams
on the frame and in the hinge of salt

stubbornly creaks what returns to the earth,
measured reward and the ideal infernal
altitude: steal

gentile horns of Congolese blood, and the moon
livid on the cataracts.

Contenuto figurativo

Ipotesi solenne è se

se con la lingua dei vangeli semitici il vento lecca
i cardini gli stipiti e nelle filiture
le uova della polvere disseppellisce e una secca
luce e le semenze scure nelle crepe qua là là
e dappertutto

è se

se il vento affonda nella proteina il morso
e nelle radici degli sterri e trivellando il dorso
delle locuste trema e scatta
la traiettoria dell'etere omogeneo (se minimi
se minimi per minimi dà minimi
e retrattili abissi)

ed è se usi con le mani specificamente usuali

l'aria come fosse una matita di cristallo,
come un ago
sfrenando la misura il palpito numerato la superficie

e non se il vento vago

o l'aria di natura ma dell'aria-aria
l'intimissimo prisma delirante e della raffica
la curva medesima, ma il puro

omogeneo: l'idea
l'idea e il coro,
l'attimo e l'intenzione,
il lutto; il non sensibile

coro della percezione, la parabola che
che procede immutata dalla curva; poi il frutto
che scende dall'idea che; e spazio da spazio,
come l'erto transito distende d'un battito solo
il passero sbiancato dagli aerei cicli,

come l'erto uovo
che su dove e su
e nelle parti
e nelle parti delle parti
in partibus infidelium,

e su dove
per la materna anatomia, tra le carti-
lagini serpeggia e per i fragili arti
del chiasmo la nuda
incertezza, i guizzi,
il trauma e sulle scorie gelide il lume sentito,
quello nero
quello del moto, quello
dell'attimo e la follia.

Il cielo è

è pensato pesato misurato smisurato, mah! chi sa,
e la calma è il segreto dello spasmo, la radura
del cielo, la prescritta natura,
e il cielo è alquanto confuso come il consenso degli uomini,
come il cuore delle donne, semplicissima orma
il sentiero dell'acqua equibollente sulla pietra

e sempre prima molto prima quasi che tu possa
enunciare la forma o dire
una figura, l'acqua
ha già detto da sola, ore et ab aeterno, il tutto
e l'orma originale.

E però se

se tu usi l'aria come una matita di cristallo,
un ago, il perno dittongo che stride al centro
della ragione, premito del filo
d'erba che vuole inoltrarsi dentro il masso,
matrice che strepita e lavora e inventa, lenta
arteriosa iperbole, enigma madornale, immaginaria
dimensione e varia analisi, sbattendo

quanto sbattono
gli stracci delle bufere sulle creste Alleghani
per la ragione che
il cervelletto dello scoiattolo pietra diventa

e che nell'ora che solidifica
che nasce il corno
che nasce la siringa
e nasce il sambuco
e il femore sulle cosce

e viola d'amore
e cello e mandolino
nel soffio fino
del Barneгат, le rocce,

un refe di musica da niente
trasale è la viola
che taglia l'agata
e la sparuta corrente,

e se però

se sparisce l'ombra sedata dello spasmo, circoscritta,
esanime, del germe ed il richiamo sano
del minerale (calce quarzo rame) allora

la falce, ecco
la ruota, ecco
e è anche così

e anche non così

e il dolmen
il menhir
il cromlech
il sese *con le mele*

xòana e stele
colonna ed acrotèrio in noce
e il cemento delle rampe e scale
e i legni in croce
e il putiferio vaginale...

Corrado Cagli, pittore

per operare una croce
ci vogliono due legni: o
due segni e l'aria: tre
per porre l'architrave: e costole
d'aria per seminar la voce ove dio vuole.
Ma tu forse muovi la tua considerazione e giri l'ombra e la rigiri,
l'ombra dei segni progettati nuovi, nell'ordine ambigualmente
del dominio

altro:

altro dal fogliame e dagli stinchi
altro dall'onda e dalla polvere subsònica
altro dal vento e dalle pàtine romantiche
altro

dalla polpa mite e tonda e dal contatto
parallelo

altro dal filo dell'evento e della lite umana
altro dai gusci e dal velo
altro dal bianco limo latte sugli usci

in una bassa mattina di colore ovale

altro, già, altro ancora, dal graffio duro
dell'unghia sull'erma di diorite
altro dall'altro oltre l'ultimo altro
il puro omogeneo dei teoremi orali, e il puro che ritorna; l'acqua
liscia e disunita di ogni sembianza che rigenera, e sulle corna
del fuoco bianco e nero sulle corna

sanguina la sagoma adorna della tragedia orientale.

Qui mi firmo. Mi firmo col mio nome. Noi giochiamo
Solo con le conseguenze e con la inane
logica inane delle manifestazioni impulsive.

Figurative Content

It's a solemn hypothesis if

if with the language of Semitic gospels the wind licks
the hinges the frames and in the filatures
unearths the eggs of dust and a dry
light and the dark seeds in the cracks here there there
and everywhere

it's if

if the wind sinks the bit into the protein
and in the roots of excavations and drilling the locusts'
back trembles and triggers
the trajectory of the homogeneous ether (if minimums
if minimums through minimums gives minimums
and retractable abysses)

and it's if you use with specifically ordinary hands
the air as if it were a crystal pencil,
like a needle
unleashing measure the numbered throb the surface

and not if the beguiling wind

or the air of nature but of air-air
the most intimate delirious prism and the curve
itself of the barrage, but the purely

homogeneous: the idea,
the idea and the chorus,
the moment and the intention,
the mourning; the non sensitive

chorus of perception, the parable that
that proceeds unscathed from the curve; the fruit
that falls from the idea that; and space from space,
as the stiff transit spreads out in a single beat
the sparrow whitened by aerial cycles,

like the stiff egg that
over there where and over there
and in parts
and in the parts of parts
in partibus infidelium,¹

and over there where
through maternal anatomy, among the carti-
lage and across the fragile limbs of the
chasm slithers the nude
uncertainty, the darting,
the trauma and the light perceived on frozen debris,
the black one
that of motion, that
of the moment and folly.

The sky is

is pondered weighed measured and measureless, well! who knows,
and the calm is the secret of the spasm, the sky's
opening, the prescribed nature,
and the sky is just as confused as the consensus of men,
as the heart of women, the simplest footprint
the path of the equibolent² waters on the stone

and always before way before so you can almost
enunciate the form or speak
the figure, the water
has already spoken on its own, now et ab aeterno, everything
and the original footprint.

Sure but if

if you use the air like a crystal pencil,
a needle, the diphthong pivot that screeches at the center
of reason, contraction of the blade
of grass that seeks to penetrate the boulder,
matrix that clamors and works and invents, slow
arterial hyperbole, enigmatic blunder, imaginary
dimension and various analyses, slamming

as the storm's
tatters slam on the Alleghenian³ ridge
for the reason
the squirrel's cerebellum becomes stone

and that in the hour that solidifies
that bears the horn
that bears the syringe
and bears the elder
and the femur on the thighs
and viola d'amore
and cello and mandolin
in the subtle breeze
of Barnegat,⁴ the rocks,

a startled thread of nothing much
music it's the viola
that cuts the agate
and the meager current

yeah but if

if the contained, sedated, lifeless, shade of the spasm,
of the germ, disappears and the healthy call
of minerals (lime quartz copper) then

the scythe, that's it
the wheel, that's it
and it's also like that
and also not like that

and the dolmen
the menhir
the cromlech
the sese⁵ with apples

xoana⁶ and stele
column and acroterion⁷ in walnut
and the cement of ramps and stairs
and boards in a cross
and the vaginal mayhem...

Corrado Cagli, painter⁸

to set up one cross
you need two boards: or
two signs and the air: three
to lay the architrave: and ribs
of air to sow the voice where god desires.
But maybe you shift your consideration and turn the shade and turn it again,

the shade of signs projected as new, in the ambigulent⁹ order
of the dominion

something else:

other than the foliage and shins
other than the wave and subsonic dust
other than the wind and romantic patinas
other

than meek and round pulp and the parallel
contact

other than the thread of the event and human squabble
other than the shells and the veil
other than the white silty milk on doorsteps

on a low morning of oval color

other, yes, other still, than the nail's heavy
scratch on the diorite herm

other than the other beyond the ultimate other

the pure homogeneity of oral theorems, and the pure that returns; the smooth
water separated from every semblance that regenerates, and on the horns
of black and white fire on the horns
bleeds the ornate silhouette of the eastern tragedy.

I'll sign here. I'll sign with my name. We only
play with consequences and the inane
inane logic of impulsive manifestations.

¹ *In partibus infidelium* is a Latin phrase meaning "in the lands of non believers."

² The original reads *equibollente*, a combination of the prefix *equi*, meaning equal, and the adjective *bollente*, boiling. Phonetically, it is very close to the Italian *equipollente* (equivalent) for which I chose "equibolent."

³ Villa uses the adjective *Alleghani* in reference to the Allegheny Mountain Range found in the eastern United States, running from northern Pennsylvania to southern Virginia.

⁴ As strange as it may sound, the only explanation for "Barnegat" is a township located in Ocean County, New Jersey.

⁵ In Latin, *sese* is the accusative form of the reflexive pronoun meaning himself, herself, itself, or themselves.

⁶ "Xoana" were wooden effigies used in the various cults of ancient Greece. No original examples survive today, only stone or marble copies.

⁷ An *acroterion* is an architectural ornament placed on the apex of a building's pediment.

⁸ Corrado Cagli (1910-1976) was a prominent Italian painter. Over the years, Villa wrote several "poetic criticisms" dedicated to his work. It is difficult to tell if Villa had a particular Cagli piece in mind here, although it may be his *I destini intercalari* [Interposing Destinies], which was published by Edizioni d'Argo in 1949, the same publisher who printed Villa's *E ma dopo* a year later.

⁹ The original reads *ambigualente*, a combination of *ambiguo* (ambiguous) and *ambivalente* (ambivalent).

Diciassette variazioni su temi proposti per una pura ideologia fonetica

1

imprestami una battaglia di suggestioni tassative, di zanzare di
allegrie di classiche maniere o impetuose, decise, non timide né tenere

e caratteristici contatti con tutto quello che il presentimento
accumulato nel futuro accumula di relativamente straordinario e di
inconsueta potenza nell'ordine, diciamo così, per paura, per ipotesi,
per noia terrestre

calde congetture in più e di grandezza inimmaginabile
liberamente misurata nell'orbita delle frenesie come
se uno guarda dritto sull'asse dei capofitti: come a dire,
press'a poco, strabico, sguercio, o simili, di sbieco, e via

beh, spirami speculazioni apparenti e sperimentate nel chiasmo
dei tagli e delle congiunture la piena ragione del distante
coniugato con l'ubiquo

cedimi, prego, la fulminea consulenza protestata dal simbolo
temerario cedimi le tue pause solenni
(aumentate, magari!) e cantami sul pallottoliere
la materia magnifica
delle parabole senza materia
delle occhiate senza ragione
delle vacanze
delle sbadataggini infernali

cantami i disastri accertabili che s'incontrano di solito
nell'incolume spettrale della intensità lo squarcio
sui fianchi del sudario, velum templi
prex (orphica) pex (perspectiva)

intensifica la dimensione algebrica del lacero le forme
più gentili più scaltre più esaltate più generali del gesto
finalizio, dies irae

e concentra gli ultimi frantumi di umano intelletto
in un cavo inaccessibile di impropri come in un
palmo di mano o in un lago di aria ragionata
o musicata aria mentre stridono

sul disco della divinità orizzontale forbice e lesina
coltello punteruolo pece e spago

gli alberi si sposavano
 le pietre erano dèi
 il mare possedeva corpo e capo.

le immagini erano il silenzio
 inquinato. le figure erano la polpa
 dell'invisibile. e le labbra
 forti come le scapole e le mascelle.

seme era il vento.
 la voce un processo di idrogenazioni.
 il linguaggio erano le stagioni
 estreme, non eliminate.

gli odori erano gelo e notte,
 e il tempo che, tale che.
 l'anima era lontananza per uguaglianza,
 e il numero follia purissima follia.

la musica era il nodo era
 la stuoia. e lo sforzo

era l'ombra fissamente considerata
 in inconcepibile moltipliche
 incroci attriti giustapposizioni

forza per forma era il cuneo
 e l'anima futura era l'anima
 dell'anima senza divisione.

e così leggemmo insieme
 l'enuma elis i rancori
 teogonistici e le sciocchezze
 senza scampo di Kierkegaard
 e le maledizioni dell'antico
 testamento.

Il caffelatte finito, le freguglie ai piedi delle prealpi rosa
et tuae quidquid libidinis per ora
 al primissimo piano la foglia odorosa dell'arrosto con le guglie

del rosmarino al secondo ripiano il fruscio del raion
e i muscoli di ilaria spezzano l'ago inossidabile
allo sbocco delle vitamine (*lume morto e fum ki dura*)
e le pianelle e i pomodori e i peperoni al terzo uscio
anche dopo dentro in pancia i pesci voglion acqua
al quarto il soffio del borotalco sciorinato per la figlia
delle azzurre marinare (*al disco ki stravaca la scuidella*)

scroscia l'acqua al quinto piano palpita
contro le piastrelle la maniglia di porcellana a sterzo
sotto la coscia d'albicocche gorgogliano le tubature e sbatte l'asse
al sesto piano ribolle il lume elettrico davanti al Sacro
Cuore nella nicchia e raschia la radio "primavera
d'ogni cuore" nelle tenebre sgargianti e i baccalà
non si lasciano a mollo per dei secoli e dei secoli
mens optuma quaeque mens optuma

in terrazzo le rane sciacquano lenzuola e picchia
nell'umido fumo in qualche andito il ferro da stiro
un becco malinconico da preda la mamma non mi strilla
ma che vacca di una signora, ma che vacca di una,
(ma che vacca) ventata di cibarie veneziane
e ferraresi di spezie di colonie e matriciana

ma che sentano scottare la tua lagna come una spilla
fino in fondo alla strada l'acquetta dei tuoi occhi rosa
nelle adiacenze e in tutta la nazione mera
che sentano! lustri con l'acquetta della rilla rosa nel tondo
la maniglia le chiavistelle i pomi frusti d'ottone e il fondo a sera

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

delle padelle scoppi il buco delle serrature e varie
filiture d'aria nel frastuono di cicli e motocicli e nelle carie

tu potresti rivelare a tutti quanto veramente buona
è la febbre! quanto l'ira è breve e l'ebrietà e di che cosa
vivi di che pane usuale di che cure di che fame quando suona
il campanello alla porta e non aspetti nessuno di usuale

perché la anziana bagnarola si è smaltata nel bieco
serale il tripode è caduto con fracasso
nelle adiacenze e in tutta la nazione mera (mamma
se fosse mamma capirebbe, se lo fosse!) che palpitazioni
cardiache cor aestuans cor tremitans cor videns

grande dolcezza di senso a somiglianza del vento prealpino
negli specchi rosa dentro i bronchi e nella tromba nell'anima
delle scale il cielo è andato in alto! alto spreco

(se fosse mamma capirebbe!) ahi, polvere di rondoni
scapicollanti, sù, al cielo! non volate così sotto, tanto basso,
così qui! lo specchio incrinato da una ruga risollewa
la scarogna, ruggini e iridate le gronde
raccolgono una vuota eco e un secolo di ricordi

e i secoli ricordi in fuga a onde verso il vicolo cieco,
e il simbolo dei ricordi è l'acciuga appesa ai travi
e là saltavi per intingere la mollica e la Natura va
più dolce e più filata nei seni dei bambini

se non che il cuore se si è molto fini
il cuore quando è perso è perso non lo prendi più.
Piangi. La stanga di nikel e il vento
il vento, semplicemente il vento.

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

4

it is world of the back hune wone it is
it is world of the horse half heart head
it is world of the workwork it is is

it is father of the snakewife
it is world of the tree and tree and
and it other is father of the other
and of the all all all all other.

what is it? native. what and why?
why, christ, why, we tell. alien.

I tell: yes. I. native and alien. Signe
vivant. I. signe signe signe. with mien
with deep mien and dark drag.

what is it and what other? what
between it-rock-ruin and all other (water,
fire, air)? between I and me
is *water*, fire, air and all streaming chaos?

it is work of work and it

questo stabilito e confermato, noi dementi verticaloidi
e intelligenti perlomeno una volta
e mezza, rotolando un po' qua un po' di là sul terreno
trebbiato dalla furia dei molteplici
e non generati sensi di energia, noi
nutriti della semenza alacre della genialità mortale, di noialtri
chi e per quale mai festività ha piantato nelle crepe questo
seme morbido in un luogo di non attenzione, dove è fiato
che viva e serpeggi nel popolo delle foglie la Giustizia
analitica? noi consumiamo insieme la Natura
e il Terrore fino a che una resurrezione qualsivoglia
nella trama degli abissi e dei fiorami, nell'aria
segreta come quella di stamani alle 8 e 35 circa,
taglierà l'ultimo colloquio e ne trarrà, invisibile
numero, illimitato ipogeo, in balia
del liquore solenne senza seme e senza cenere

6

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

aurais-je du parvenir aux clameurs
absolus, aux ressources indifférenciées,
par l'art, par l'art sonore,
ou sur l'échelle ronde des grandes avions
transatlantiques, mamelles roulantes
dans la calme blonde, notre chair
inattendue ou multiple.

à chercher des instruments simples
et indéterminés, des instruments
proportionnels et drôles

on rencontre un étranger dans l'extase
si conséquemment sinistre et secret,

le puits des conséquences oubliées
ou refoulées dans un bain immémoriale

dans les pommes de terre dans les laves
d'éruptions dans des dollars couverts
d'une pâte subtile de démence algébrique
dans les fulgurations sexuelles
dans les opacités successives

dans toutes les entrâves héréditaires.

pas d'orguedenisation nationale – et alors
pas d'orguedeuil rational – et alors
pas d'abîmes intentionnés – pas de
et alors

7

pas d'huile – pas de grandes matières
intérieures – pas de denrées sonores
pas donc de réhalité – pas grand nombre
de tonnes de vibrations méque-aniques
pas de grandes affirmations de douleur
pas de nuit de négations parfaites
pas de mots bruts pas de mots bruits

pas de quoi pas quoi pas
d'éléments généraux reculants
généreuse au fond des abîmes intentionnés
pas de sublimes économies pas
de régularités absurdes constituées
pas d'idéalisations hybrides pas de quoi
et alors

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivicafi secundum

8

deum deum deum dixit
mais rien ne prouvant que

a dit le a dit que le prêtre romon
pour égorger la pierre[re]
oxidiane sous la lune dernière
la pépêtre va tromber trom trom

ah bien, bien bien, ça
la laimière coule des mamelles
du soprano Dodoro telles
telles que: "no! non erubescam!
cur erubescitis?" elle
chanchantait voix vive fanatisme

et ce n'est pas ce que je crois que ce ne soit pas
pas parce que les lions fébricitants à Mycène

ont changé ses accents ses couleurs ses temps!
ont changé: "deus dixit
non erubescam! cur erube
scitis?" flâneurs bien élevés,
faquirs fatalistes, dénoncez

et la flumvière coule des veines
des mamelles du soprano
sur les néophites obstrués
par l'hygiène sucrementale
des sexes des vieux-cesexes

9

desires between powers and quiet

if here he known
if flames down

all white you when future speak
all white with smell
all white legitimate confusion people
all white thoughts
all white singing
all is cause of movement of
all white herself and

a line agonize on the earth and
a flame too agonize on the
a poem only recognize upon limb
of white airless
of no-air

e pigro segno delle sonore agonie il tardo
separare sé da sé e udir fina
marmorea onda e nebbia delle partizioni
straniere e dolce fiamma inglese o beduina.

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivicafi secundum

10

Il panico spoglio degli dèi dell'acqua di tutti i giorni
delle pietre del cemento dei pensieri dei pozzi dei rioni
della velocità non sai mai se dove si comincia
e se dove si finisce è ora e dove la prudenza

è come una lettera cancellata dalla lunga pioggia
fine, e la cavi di saccoccia e ti viene la follia,

come pezzi sudici di richieste confidate a venti
persone senza leggerezza senza rimorsi autentici
accomiatandosi affezionato, e non giova
a gran che il sussidio dalle comunità, e c'è chi piange
irresistibilmente, e chi è di leva e non ci vuole
andare, e la zingara intanto legge chi sa cosa
sulla mano trasandata in via Lombardia a Roma

sulla mano vecchie anatomie civilizzate
o nomadi, cadute in avaria, o stravaganti
diagrammi di allegorie sentimentali per maramaglia,
o come sillabe ribattute da cicale palestinesi,
o di prudenza casalinghe, di mortali
delicatezze, o forsennate eleganze
che abitano qui in questi paraggi, e irritazioni

da sconcio madrigale tutto istintivo, tassativo
anzi, e cortesie mostruose; e rudimentali, proprio
appena appena in punta, divinazioni, e miracoli
a bellaposta esagerati senza sentimento, tutti
in un pettine di nailon per pudicizie; e curiose
fiabe morali da ripassare al tempo
futuro o condizionale, tra forbice trinciapolli

e bulloni di turbine seminati e tiranti e sestanti
e madremiti e reperti preistorici d'arte vasaria; e
dipinte un po' per tutto a scie fosforiche le tenebre
dei galli dei passerini e delle bisce e raffiche
di porpora, la vaniglia di ossa bianche e polpe
di brina e architetture di zucchero frantumano
orizzonti promiscui meccanici vegetali come un filo
unico di refe in attese di profetiche gare e di un ozio
colorito, familiare, ospitale, volante, salato.

Oh, filo di refe perduto dalla sottana zingara
pronuncia in pubblico il morso pio, rituale,
della corrosione liturgica, della quotidiana
ma quotidiana redenzione, e toglie di dosso
al mondo rionale il tempo, come toglie
la camicia a un bambino dopo la cerimonia.

en rims ki se inkaval
com li jest del Destin
second li numbrs da rot astral
ki immen dus animal

eu te dic en son latin
rent el sangr di longbard
comt el cor de bastard
ma el penser di omnadge fin:

O mi durce auta proi
de li forests d'obscur
o surce di tuts li foil
u ti te a mis l'endroi

e u ti regard li entroil
ki es, por favor, ki t'enjoi?
ki es ki t'ennai?
ki es de li stels pur

au tems di l'eklyps permanent
de jorn e de not, ki es

ki assí t'envoi gygrant li vent
de a rot? oh, pra long la long voi.
oh, prec, sis bem prudvent,
oh, escort, prec, la vois

ternant li secrements
de la loi talian e de li sents
di l'eidogram gypzian ki kalm
s'ensud en l'auratge di man!

Va donc a man partadger
a solitud drent li verger:

escort donc unit li animal provenzan
e espet un cor cristian genial,
o mi durce proi, o natal
de a fol deman, jornad de mat;

eu mir de longtems ni fait
ni desfait el mi pais dinans,
en so projet offis, e eu pans
el son outradge e a desesprans.

in rime che si accavallano
come i gettiti del Destino
secondo i numeri della ruota astrale
cui trascinano i due animali

io ti dico in suono latino,
così simile al sangue lombardo,
e con cuore di bastardo
ma con pensiero di fine umanità:

o mia dolce alta preda
delle foreste di oscurità
o sorgente di tutte le foglie
dove tu hai posto il tuo recapito

e dove custodisci le viscere labirintiche,
chi è, per favore, che ti diletta?
chi è che ti annoia?
quale delle stelle pure

al tempo delle eclissi permanenti
di giorno e di notte, chi è

che così qui ti manda, facendo girare i venti
della ruota? oh, lungo la lunga vita,
oh, ti prego, sii assai previdente!
oh, ascolta, prego, la voce

che eterna i giuramenti
della legge e dei significati
dell'ideogramma tzigano, che calmo
si denuda sulla bufera delle mani!

ora la mano va a frazionare
la solitudine dentro le verziere:

ascolta, dunque, uniti gli animali provenzali
e attendi un cuore cristiano geniale,
o mia dolce preda, che nasci
dal folle domani, una giornata da matti;

io guardo da lontano il mio paese
ancora né fatto né disfatto,
offeso nel suo avvenire, e io penso
il suo oltraggio, e la disperazione.

Collima, dico, lo schema con l'essenza? e il dominio
con le leggi dell'essenza? e l'essenza medesima
con la molta fronte del tempo? Tutto, dico,

che hai fatto sparire una volta e una volta
nel gioco degli occhi labili è? idea soltanto
sarebbe? per esempio, dico:

tra l'occhio e il lacero fondo
delle trame è una miniera, corre
tra l'occhio e il malocchio, corre

e lavora il futuro delle forze
intimissime, il ragionare prodigioso,
il mutamento; e la fonte dei barlumi

indugia con le sottrazioni irrimediabili.
Oh, avara ipocrisia, menda originale, prèdica
l'uovo bianco alto come la luna, il puro

Zero aumentato dal silenzio, dal genio
imperituro della catastrofe e della nudità!
Consci? collima? indugia, dico?

Guarda, allora: non l'iride cornea,
non forse nemmeno il cristallo ialino,
disco eccentrico della crisalide, ma l'occhio

l'occhio-bruco, l'occhio-verme,
l'occhio-larva, l'acropoli-farfalla, e il suono
delle cavallette impenitenti dal tempo del deserto!

Generosa inutilità, generosa, dunque,
generosissima ipocrisia, pesa il grado
di imminenza, il sapore dello stile

pratico, le arterie numerate una a una,
la batteria, la tepida fontana dei gas, e la caduta
obliqua immortale degli atomi sul fondo uniforme.

Ululavano monosillabi ossificati, sillabe
plurali al cloro, e mascelle-caverne,
e le meningi esorbitanti di curiosità:

c'è un oceano ignoto, e di colore, in qualche modo,
molto chiaro? e sentenze e nascite e precipizi
di luce, e doni capricciosi, e gorgheggi aerati

di balsami venerei, e spazi gelosi
di salsa, vigili, flessibili? dunque:
collima lo schema? l'essenza? Guarda

ancora: scenario larvale di estasi liquide,
acidità del pensiero spento, zootipico, questo
possiedi a essere solo nel possesso. Essere

solo a possedere ciò che si possiede, cosa
possiamo utilizzare? povero patrimonio
arcaico delle cose, degli utensili, decente

simbolo delle rassegnazioni e dei legami!
Sono di tutti i sassi? saranno, dico,
di qualcuno. I sassi? amano in silenzio

il silenzio. I sassi strutturano il sibilo
e la traiettoria. I sassi quanti secoli
vincolano dentro? e non piangono, non

sanguinano: sposano l'ombra, la ripudiano,
sposano il vento, la forza, la calma, tutto...
forse le leggi umane sono di sasso?

I sassi sono dure leggi sul terreno
e nell'aria e dopo conquistati i sassi, qui
comincia la pesca universale...

pesca la luna nel fosso col rastrello, mano
saggia avida svelta, e che lunone! quello
delle grandi nottate popolari e delle nebbie

grigie nel cuore unico del pipistrello,
degli innamorati nei giardini comunali,
o forse il lunone dei pozzi dei gatti dei fossi?

o quello dei fuochisti e macchinisti,
o delle maree? o quello di quella sera
dentro il bicchiere della grappa e a fil di tetto?

o quello di Venezia, del cinematografo,
o, se di sangue, quello dentro i teschi

letterari o riflessa negli spettrogrammi e trema

sulle corna insonni dei caprioli? o quello
sui rapidi senza patria e senza numeri
inchiodati al casello di frontiera tra la neve?

o sui lucenti calcari di cattedrali
cui le formiche spianano e trapanano
le sementi d'erba gramigna, oppure

quello sentimentale nei cuori ermetici
dei guerrieri e dei guerrafondai?
O luna eccellente, certo, l'essenza collima...

e soffia l'ignara polvere del tuo sorriso
verso l'aldilà di ogni futuro, oltre ogni
dove ultimo il tempo futuro sparisce,

e l'idolo di Amorgo sullo stelo
inflexibile nell'amoroso inganno scruta
l'essenza di una incredibile vela, e c'è,

dico, nei seni inviolati oltre ogni tempo
futuro, lo squarcio dove l'ignara polvere
del tuo sorriso corre grida e posa

senza decrescere più? è un grano, solo
un grano di frumento rubato a stiaia
infinite di pula in tutto l'energico

universo: e a cercarlo per la prodiga
eternità tu cercherai: lo troverai quando
il caldo rumore dei tempi vuoti si smorza.

13

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivicafi secundum

nous a confié l'instar du verbum dans un prisme [or]oral
era un polpo armoniastico, un archetipo deliberato nel tema
della calcificazione 1° les gencives orageuses
et les lèvres ombrageuses
in italiano: plessi contorni rabeschi cimose cornici
profili trafilati moreschi bugnanti rosoni ecc. ecc.

2° les grandes incertitudes appliquées sur l'im-

minence séduite du sperme-gauche

idest 3° la fin raisonnée des mots-machine-came-
carambole-hypothème à serrure mi-raison

alors pourpar l'émotion raisonnée l'organisme
outre le jour nuit outre la vérité qui tomba
sous l'hégémonie de la perception, et donc

onomatéeillez : a) le chaos (X)
b) la vélocité négative (-v) c) l'énergie négative,
c.à.d. qui est qui est le quiète le avant le repos (-j)
d) la lumière négative |et| qui n'est ni l'aurore ni
l'obscur ni la soif ni l'éclat ni la plaie ni

subdivisez, pour amuser Einstein, la masse incidentelle
occidentelle
excidentelle
accidentelle

agacez la hiérarchie mécanique [et] déhiscente
des chaos assemblés
comme qui
les turbines et les bielles et les cames
c.à.d. *e l'è bel e l'è bun e l'è gram*
e l'è gram cume un cural
viva la machina del gias artificial

l'éternité commestible / avec qui qui / avec am
les chances de l'improbable absolu [-t]
le thème du tempstems [-t^t] et la cendre

eructée de vertèbres méphitophéliques |t^t|
h

on arrache les envergures secrètes des espaces
des futures enventures

parcourir les tunnels ananalyser les éponges urbanistes

pincer les shrapnells enterrés
entraîner *sur les bancs du noir du zéro* tous
les monstres – rameaux du blafard
explosoisifs trironiques engendrés par l'illustre
communion des communions des gros sexes anonymes et
tous les sexes de genre x y z... n... et

de genregenre -x -y -z... -n et!

oh là là! chaosagète bascogne!

chaosagète bascogne	ouestgond
guascogne	vache blonde
gascoké	quartz de gomme
euzkon-con	gouache chome
euzkara	oeufs de gland
	hache de sonde
	culdequelconque
	bascule oignon
	arche de carogne

les scories

de noir oxhydriques chlorhydriques
noirmère noirpère noirfou noirsuie
noirnue noirnoyau noirpluie
noirsoit noirsouffle noirsoul
noirneige noirsuitefuite noirnul

nous sûmes vraiment décider la science-mensonge
rhapsodique, l'eidoloyatrie-convulsive
moi conconnaît les crucruthèmes bifides
les mythèmêmes trifides
les blasphèmes fifides
la pantomême infide

et le fourchettes catapulte charrue aéromètre boomerang
tomahawk CGE, RKO, cetera

les morphèmes vi-vides
les théorhèmes avides
les myephèmes midides
les choeurs épiqueudermiques
du stéatopyge
du mélampyge
du yacintopyge
du leucopyge

pyge pyge pyge sur les épaves rohoeurpyge
noirnoir des voixons subtilisées
jusqu'au NUL qui est bien l'outré ou l'autre

il faut donc: tautomatiser l'essentiel du chaos par des siens

par d'hyperseinsthèmes entrouverts
par des fonctions perdûment inattendues
par des mappes auraurales
par des axes floraisons
au fond de la pluie grise de la protosensitivity
(frappe à l'intérieure antérieure de la matière)

par des axes figurals par des saxes ensemencés
par des sexes homogénéisés par des astrolabes
récitales par des doigts par des stygmates
minérales par des dagues par des excès numerals
par des dès par des itérations germinales par des plaies

par descendre des scories des épaves d'horizon
à la puissance n à l'ancienne inquiétude olive
des expertises pures aux vectors maximums!

dans le ruine dans le gel dans le grande bagarre
du grand tour entre nacre et ardoise
réveillons sous les portes blondes les daletths
multipliés de lithium en hélice, corpus-noise,
par ex-simple

le matin répandait sa fraîcheur gothique
sur le entures, mes amies
fidèles étant toutes attentives, ensevelies

dans le fémur d'Apollon
je ne pouvais pas les exciter par les doigts
ni par les dès vifs

il faut dinciser le code, donc, à n (haine)
impulsion très égales
pour saisir les cendres les scories les épaves
du grand cliché négatif corpus noir
des grandes issues roulantes!

inventer attendre échouer

la flèche toujours interrompue
 par la cendres
 par les encidentrails exléctriques
 et scories
 magnétiquestiques
tique tyché corpus noir
(rovina, e mai udito anima più profonda di un profondo

popolo mentre va in rovina)

la guêpe zigzaguante effrayant corpus noir
englouti pourpar la merveille
le solsoleil-perdrix- dans-dans le blé blond

le pornophème sépulcral s'exhalant sex-haleine
sur la dioriteurite en fleur
le choeur-araignée
sur les ailes des logis cinématiquistiques
tique tyché / tyché croque-mitaine

jusqu'à ce que l'unité l'émotionnelle soit réduite
à la mesure d'un biblionème de poil de trou de cul

de guêpe zigzaguante sur l'épi

il faut diviser ébranler diminuer le nul dans le nul
et ainsi soit-il voilà la formule:

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} \text{dérisoire} & & \text{X (X --- I)} & & \\ ! = & & = & & = ! \\ \text{inébranlable} & & 2^h & & \end{array}$$

14

prati erbe terremoti ecc. tutto come una volta
come di tutti ecc. gragnuole e stoppie
dove vanno a smorzarsi le mattine delle dita
rosa, e l'inumidiscono arti vizzi che si sfanno
o adolescenti o mezzo e mezzo, *quinto dato ricevü*
quindes donn fan quindes cü, e verde: *verde que*
verde que yo e nel concime secco e sfuso

y yo quiero rojo, y muslos para el lumbre
y pájaros de besos y nombres de pájaros
de besos y medidas de pájaros de besos
y medidas de pájaros de besos de brisas, ah
que yo quiero, sui prati, ai cavalcavia, lungo
le scarpate, dove uno sottolizza a voce: uccidere
vangare trebbiare tribolare e tutto
il vocabolario popolare a diretto
parmi la jeunesse des écoles générales (mi pare)

dove si tirano su di scatto alti 12 m. nel lattime
della nebbia non conclusa, confidenziale, nel catalogo

delle opere umane scheletri di pesci di ferro coi bulloni,
e le vene di rame, *ah que quiero*, dell'alta tensione

e dichiarato infine, molto solennemente, che *l'amore
e farem come fa il pesce, l'amor senza mutande
non lo farem mai più*, a quell'epoca tutti si udiva
allora per un intimo dovere estremamente naturale
l'oscuro sangue socratico in battaglia nelle arterie
dei passeri e nei numeri allarmati, e insieme
una lama di temperino arrugginita dentro una buca,
o una falce, e pezzi di cingoli e zoccoli paesani

ah, que yo quiero verde y rojo, pandispagna!

e nei recessi zenitali una sillaba sola
radiofonica, e nel vocabolario impensato
del sasso lì, o nella freccia del clacson
che riga di zuccherini il ventre fottuto dei celesti
smagli sopra la nuca, o sulle rotte
ortogonali, sull'analisi cocciuta di un cono
dinamico, come una grazia antiquata ma geniale l'idea
dei seni italiani celebra la presenza e la consuma

*Dico de te, Ytalya subjecta, dico
de te*, smorto ambiente soleggiato,
turistico, schiava delle terre, gente
scarsa, gente acerba, e antico sobrio
tenore in ogni ceto, in ogni sesso, in ogni
senso, discreto. E lampaneggi folgorati di mica
e baleni dei zigzag o melograna o spiga

o punta di segala d'avena a spinapesce
loglio ortica per natiche nel giorno dell'obbrobrio
che cresce gramigna zizzania e carestia aprica

15

verso l'ora che cade una certa quale cartilagine d'ora scabrosa

vennero lo strepito e il concerto e l'ira delle trombe negre

e della mucca nei reconditi ronfi della latteria

sotterranea, e lo scompiglio meteorologico nella segatura

bagnata come un pulcino,

e un solo spirito

trino quanto un gancio ruggine di minaccia ebbe
a quell'ora possesso dell'ora nel mulinello gigante
dei gusci d'arachidi, come di una legione perduta in trasferta
e solenne delle sue armi preistoriche, degli scudi di corame
ringhiosi, delle derrate, del tabacco, dei registri di fureria,
dei flebili scudisci all'ombra dei temporalì, degli ordigni
igienico-sessuali, dei molari profondi e carciati, delle ginocchia
divaricate e petti in fuori come i rubinetti di latte,

o pioppe

d'argento a cresta in ripa del torrente, contorti per tutta
la distesa vergata sui catasti, e sollevò alfine
la sua danza vitrea, e leccò levigò pazientemente quindi
il rilievo dei tuoni in toppe smorte come muscoli
disarticolati, allergici, sulle essenze, e trepidò
razzando solitaria e pensosa a un brindisi
e in crescendo danzò la pazza gallina accidentale fino
al quindici gradino della noia fantastica, e poi più

16

matter	and	egg	eyes		
and	egg	eyes	jewels	and	
crammings	egg	eyes	jewels	and	
+	greatful	dark	drive	VIRUS	+

and old VIRUS as infinitive eyes =
as Select Souls in dwelling of
of WEST MATTER WEST HIGH WEST
as old Furies of the Philosophy
of the Socratic Hope and Surplus
with grateful Night's Pole in the lung
of a mad horse
and instantaneous VIRUS
and sky of the GREAT VIRUS

17

ecco ecco ecco

ecco

ecco

da un panoramico scrimolo

urbano vedi spirito meridiano boccheggia di concerti d'ampie
giurisdizioni di evangeliche collisioni che leccano gli stipiti e i minimi
orli del silenzio a bocca spalancata e dopo finalmente
sulle tavolate lavagne scranni troni stalli sgabelli chaises longues la
miscelata fioritura della mentalità corrente e il geniale
e scombinato giuoco dei gradini delle raffiche degli elenchi
telefonici dei prezzi calmieri dei cartelloni pubblicitari e l'aria,
poi, ECCO, l'aria nelle sillabe di un'ottava di Torquato
al Gianicolo, oh, ecco, questa sì, e nulla

ecco

ecco

scivola più nella gran voce universale alla disperata, tranne
la breve cara voce dei poeti d'Italia, Alfonso Gatto, o
quella di Montale, di Sandrino pederasta, breve fischio
in statu erecto, e nulla è rivelato se non la conchiglia arida
di riflessi vocali e il sommo vestibolo di acido carbonico originale
della rivelazione, se tu abbandoni gli aneliti
e scendi al rischio mansueto di contare

uno per uno il numero geometrico della giacca
borghese, o crudele eroe matematico

ecco

e insieme allora in coro all'unisono insieme bene
tutti ecco si dice: ma cosa
c'è di irrivelato, di inevitabile
nella sufficienza, o nella differenza o
nella meraviglia toccante urgentissima dell'amico
Leonardo, o nell'attenzione, o in questo
ecco umano rovinoso parere? ecco

dal nulla al nulla, liquido tragitto,
bassorilievo d'acqua falsa, è l'inevitabile

Seventeen Variations on Proposed Themes for a Pure Phonetic Ideology

1

lend me a battle of binding suggestions, of mosquitoes of
mirth of classical or impulsive manners, determined, not timid nor tender

and characteristic contacts with everything the accumulated foreboding
accumulates in the future that's relatively extraordinary and of
unusual power within the order, let's say, out of fear, or hypothesis,
or earthly boredom

and there's more warm conjectures of unthinkable greatness
measured liberally in the orbit of frenzies as
if staring at the board of headfirst dives: like saying,
more or less, cross-eyed, one-eyed, or similar, askew, and so on

well, fill me with apparent speculations, tested in the chasm
of cuts and joints the full reason of the distant
conjugated with the ubiquitous

grant me, please, the swift council protested by the reckless
symbol grant me your solemn pauses
(increased, even!) and on the abacus sing to me
of magnificent subjects
of parables without subjects
of glances without reason
of vacations
of infernal absentmindedness

sing to me of ascertainable disasters usually seen
in the ghastly invulnerability of intensity the rip
along the shroud, velum templi
prex (orphica) pex (perspectiva)

intensify the algebraic dimension of the tear forms
more gentle more shrewd more exalted more general of the finalizing
gesture, dies irae¹

and concentrate the last fragments of human intellect
in an inaccessible hollow of abuses like in a
palm of a hand or in a lake of reasoned air
or air set to music while on the disk

of horizontal divinity screech scissors awl
bodkin knife pitch and twine

2

trees married
stones were gods
the sea had body and brains.

images were polluted
silence. figures the pulp
of the invisible. and lips
strong like jaws and shoulder blades.

seed was the wind.
the voice a process of hydrogenations.
not eliminated, the extreme
seasons were language.

scents were frost and night,
and weather that, was such that.
the soul distance through equality,
and the number folly the purest folly.

music was the knot it was
the wicker. and effort
the shade obsessively considered
in inconceivable multiplications
junctions frictions juxtapositions

force through form was the wedge
and the future soul the soul
of the soul undivided.

and so together we read
the enuma elish² the theogonistic
rancor and inescapably
Kierkegaard's nonsense

and the curses of the old
testament.³

3

After coffee, crumbs at the feet of the pink prealps
et tuae quidquid lubidinis per ora
on the first floor the fragrant leaf of the roast with pinnacles
of rosemary on the second shelf the rustle of rayon
and ilaria's muscles snap the stainless needle
at the vitamins' outlet (*lume morto e fum ki dura*)⁴
and slippers and tomatoes and peppers at the third threshold
even after inside in the stomach fish need water on the
fourth the puff of talcum powder displayed for the daughter
of blue lady sailors (*al disco ki stravaca la scuidella*)⁵

the water roars on the fifth floor throbs
against the tiles the wheel-shaped porcelain handle
under the apricots' thigh the pipes gurgle and the toilet seat slams
on the sixth floor the electric light boils before the Sacred
Heart in the niche and the radio scratches "primavera
d'ogni cuore"⁶ in the flaring darkness and don't let
the baccalà soak for centuries and centuries
mens optuma quaeque mens optuma

on the terrace frogs rinse sheets and the iron
in the humid smoke in some hallway pecks
a melancholic beak of prey mother doesn't yell
what a whore of a lady, but what a whore of a,
(but what a whore) wave of venetian and ferrarese
food colonial spices and matriciana⁷

but let them hear your burning complaint like a brooch
at the end of the street the drizzle of your pink eyes
in the neighborhood and throughout the mere nation
let them hear it! with the drizzle of the pink rilla⁸ in the round
polish the handle the bolt the worn-out brass knobs and at night the bottom

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

of pans let the hole in the locks explode and various
threads of air in the rumble of cycles and motorcycles and in the caries

you could reveal to all just how great the fever
really is! how brief the wrath and intoxication and what you
live on the usual bread what cures what hunger when the doorbell

rings and you're not expecting anyone unusual

for the enamel's chipped off the old tub and in the night's
shade the tripod fell with a bang
in the vicinity and throughout the mere nation (mother
if it was mother she'd understand, if it was her!) what cardiac
palpitations cor aestuans cor tremitans cor videns

great sweetness of sense resembling the pre-alpine wind
in the pink mirrors behind the bronchioles and in the well in the soul
of the stairs the sky has risen! rising waste
(if it was mother she'd understand) ah, dust of diving
swifts, up, to the sky! don't fly that low, so low,
so here! the mirror crazed by a wrinkle picks up bad
luck again, the rusty and iridescent eaves
gather an empty echo and a century of memories

and the centuries memories in flight in waves toward the dead end,
and the symbol of memories is the anchovy hanging from beams
and there you jumped to dip the bread's crumb and Nature moves
sweeter and straighter in the chest of children

unless the heart if one's extremely subtle
the heart once it's lost it's lost you'll never catch it again.
You cry. The nickel rod and the wind
the wind, simply the wind.

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

4*

it is world of the back hune wone it is
it is world of the horse half heart head
it is world of the workwork it is is

it is father of the snakewife
it is world of the tree and tree and
and it other is father of the other
and of the all all all all other.

what is it? native. what and why?
why, christ, why, we tell. alien.

I tell: yes. I. native and alien. Signe
vivant. I. signe signe signe. with mien
with deep mien and dark drag.

what is it and what other? what
between it-rock-ruin and all other (water,
fire, air)? between I and me
is *water*, fire, air and all streaming chaos?

it is work of work and it
is world of the world of the horse
upon the tree as fragrant breath

as pleasure. revolves and dies. I
see. now and plus tard. plus
tard de la lune.

words wind wife blowing
escape tombé d'après nature:
what is it? christ! what is time?
I felt what. I felt what
all kingdom is workwork
of the snake-abyss, as native
olives and all alien things.

e givme a tickling spring, christ,
with wings and with
hushed rumbles and exquisite resemblances.

and talk me and tell dark hours
dark oblivions dark trees dark
leaves dark darkness and
whitening air. it is
a world in intumo semine.

5

seeds in the tracks at the end of the line under the railroad ties
seeds on the cobblestone of the capital
a grain on the sparrow's tail
a proton (in the parlance of our times) a quantum bloated with shade
in the isotope
or (let's suppose) a bacillus aestheticus subillimus
in the wolf's maxillary membrane or the anal
orifice of the whale⁹
a seed (as we say around here) that leavens, of Justice
a speck (or crumb) maybe dried out, exactly,
of banal Justice at the bottom of the pocket of the old
fiendish minister in a swing

a drop (let's put it like that) inside the sink all night long
oh, time is a falsity that irrigates
the epidermis in zones of friction
a slim and gentile protein as a postulate for garden snakes
a flashing in a celestial crevasse, symbolic,
or an instantaneous delusion that sails in the cranium
of a dog without a master, whereby

once established and confirmed, we demented verticaloides
and intelligent at least once
and a half, rolling a little here and a little over there on the terrain
threshed by the fury of multiples
and un-generated senses of energy, we
nourished by the brisk sowing of mortal geniality, all ours
who and for what sort of festivity have planted in the crevices this
soft seed in a place of non attention, where is the breath
the analytic Justice lives and slithers in the population
of leaves? together we consume Nature
and Terror until any sort of resurrection
in the weave of abysses and flower-patterns, in the secret
air like the one this morning around 8:35,
will cut the last meeting and from it will draw, invisible
number, boundless hypogeum, at the mercy
of the solemn liquor without seed nor ash

6

nous aimions tous beaucoup ça

aurais-je du parvenir aux clameurs
absolus, aux ressources indifférenciées,
par l'art, par l'art sonore,
ou sur l'échelle ronde des grandes avions
transatlantiques, mamelles roulantes
dans la calme blonde, notre chair
inattendue ou multiple.

à chercher des instruments simples
et indéterminés, des instruments
proportionnels et drôles

on rencontre un étranger dans l'extase
si conséquemment sinistre et secret,

le puits des conséquences oubliées

ou refoulées dans un baignoire immémoriale

dans les pommes de terre dans les laves
d'éruptions dans des dollars couverts
d'une pâte subtile de démence algébrique
dans les fulgurations sexuelles
dans les opacités successives
dans toutes les entraves héréditaires.

pas d'orguedenisation nationale – et alors
pas d'orguedeuil rational – et alors
pas d'abîmes intentionnés – pas de
et alors

7

pas d'huile – pas de grandes matières
intérieures – pas de denrées sonores
pas donc de réhalité – pas grand nombre
de tonnes de vibrations méque-aniques
pas de grandes affirmations de douleur
pas de nuit de négations parfaites
pas de mots bruts pas de mots bruits

pas de quoi pas quoi pas
d'éléments généraux reculants
généreuse au fond des abîmes intentionnés
pas de sublimes économies pas
de régularités absurdes constituées
pas d'idéalisations hybrides pas de quoi
et alors

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivifici secundum

8

deum deum deum dixit
mais rien ne prouvant que

a dit le a dit que le prêtre romon
pour égorger la pierre[re]
oxidiane sous la lune dernière
la pépêtre va tomber trom trom

ah bien, bien bien, ça
la laimière coule des mamelles

du soprano Dodoro telles
telles que: "no! non erubescam!
cur erubescitis ?" elle
chanchantait voix vive fanatisme

et ce n'est pas ce que je crois que ce ne soit pas
pas parce que les lions fébricitants à Mycène
ont changé ses accents ses couleurs ses temps!
ont changé: "deus dixit
non erubescam! cur erube
scitis?" flâneurs bien élevés,
faquirs fatalistes, dénoncez

et la flumvière coule des veines
des mamelles du soprano
sur les néophites obstrués
par l'hygiène sucrementale
des sexes des vieux-cesexes

9*

desires between powers and quiet

if here he known
if flames down

all white you when future speak
all white with smellall white legitimate confusion people
all white thoughts
all white singing
all is cause of movement of
all white herself and

a line agonize on the earth and
a flame too agonize on the
a poem only recognize upon limb
of white airless
of no-air

*and lazy sign of sonorous agonies the slow
separation of self from self and hearing
fine marble wave and fog of foreign
partitions and sweet english or beduin flame.*

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivicafi secundum

the awesome sorting of everyday water gods
of stones cement thoughts wells districts
speed and you never know if where to start
and if where to end is now and where prudence
is like a letter erased by a long slender rain,
and you pull it from your pocket and madness sets in,

like filthy scraps of demands entrusted to twenty
people without levity without genuine remorse
affectionately saying their goodbyes, and there's no real
benefit in subsidy from communities, and a few cry
irresistibly, and others are drafted and don't want
to go, and meanwhile the gypsy reads who knows what
on the unkempt hand on via Lombardia in Rome

on the hand ancient civilized anatomies
or nomadic, fallen in disarray, or extravagant
diagrams of sentimental allegories for riff-raff,
or like syllables pounded again by Palestinian cicadas,
or house wives in their prudence, mortal
delicacies, or insane elegances
that live around here, and rashes

from indecent madrigals, all instinctive, better yet
binding, and monstrous civilities; and rudimentary, right there
just barely on the tip, divinations, and miracles
purposefully exaggerated and without feeling, all
in a nylon comb fit for modesty; and curious
moral fables to be rewritten either in the future
or the conditional, between poultry shears

and disseminated turbine bolts and ties and sextants
and nuts and prehistoric findings of vase art; and
painted a bit everywhere in phosphoric wakes the darkness
of roosters of sparrows and snakes and bursts
of crimson, the vanilla of white bones and lean cuts
of frost and sugar architectures shatter
promiscuous mechanical vegetable horizons like one unbroken
string of twine waiting for prophetic contests and a colored,
familiar, hospitable, flying, salty idleness.

Oh, string of twine fallen from the gypsy's slip
deliver in public the pious, ritual morsel
of liturgical corrosion, of the quotidian

yet quotidian redemption, and remove time
from the back of the local world, as you
remove a child's shirt after the ceremony.

11*

en rims ki se inkaval
com li jest del Destin
second li numbrs da rot astral
ki immen dus animal

eu te dic en son latin
rent el sangr di longbard
comt el cor de bastard
ma el penser di omnadge fin:

O mi durce auta proi
de li forests d'obscur
o surce di tuts li foil
u ti te a mis l'endroi

e u ti regard li entroil
ki es, por favor, ki t'enjoi?
ki es ki t'ennai?
ki es de li stels pur

au tems di l'eklyps permanent
de jorn e de not, ki es

ki assí t'envoi gygrant li vent
de a rot? oh, pra long la long voi.
oh, prec, sis bem prudvent,
oh, escort, prec, la vois

ternant li secrements
de la loi talian e de li sents
di l'eidogram gypzian ki kalm
s'ensud en l'auratge di man!

Va donc a man partadger
a solitud drent li verger:

escort donc unit li animal provenzan
e espet un cor cristian genial,
o mi durce proi, o natal
de a fol deman, jornad de mat;

eu mir de longtems ni fait
ni desfait el mi pais dinans,
en so projet offis, e eu pans
el son outradge e a desesprans.

in rhymes that pile up
like the revenue of Destiny
according to the numbers on the astral wheel
that drags two animals

I'll tell you in Latin sound,
so similar to Lombard blood,
and with a bastard heart
but with thought of fine humanity:

oh my sweet high prey
of the forests of obscurity
oh source of all the leaves
where you placed your address

and where you guard the labyrinthine viscera,
who is it, prithee, that delights you?
who is it that annoys you?
which of the pure stars
at the time of the permanent eclipses
during the day and at night, who is it

that sends you here like this, causing the winds
of the wheel to turn? oh, along your long life,
oh, I beg you, be extremely cautious!
oh please listen to the voice

that eternalizes the oaths
of the law and meanings
of the Tzigane ideogram, that calmly
undresses on the storm of hands!

Now the hand moves to fraction
the solitude inside the orchards:

listen, then, once united the Provençal animals
and wait for a genial Christian heart,
oh my sweet prey, born
of tomorrow's madness, a crazy day;

I look at my country from afar
still neither done nor undone,
offended in its future, and I think of
its offense, and desperation.

12

Does the outline mirror the essence? and the power
the laws of essence? and the essence itself
the vast brow of time? Everything, I mean,

that you made disappear once and once alone
in the game of transient eyes? Could it be

just an idea? for example, I mean:

between the eye and the deep tear
in the weave is a mine, it runs
between the eye and the evil-eye, runs

and works the future of the most intimate
forces, the prodigious reasoning,
the mutation; and the source of glimmers

lingers with the irremediable subtractions.
Oh, stingy hypocrisy, original fine, preach
the white egg high as the moon the pure

Zero increased by silence, by the deathless
genius of catastrophe and nudity!
Do you know? Parallel? I mean, linger?

Look, then: not the corneal iris,
and maybe not even the hyaline crystal,
eccentric disc of the chrysalis, but the eye

the grub-eye, the worm-eye,
the larva-eye, the acropolis-butterfly, and the sound
of the grasshoppers impenitent since the days of the desert!

Generous uselessness, generous, therefore,
the most generous hypocrisy, weighs the degree
of imminence, the taste of practical

style, the arteries numbered one by one,
the battery, the tepid fountain of gases, and the oblique

immortal fall of atoms across the uniform bottom.

Ossified monosyllables howled, plural
chlorine syllables, and cavern-jaws,
and the meninges, exorbitant with curiosity:

is there an unknown ocean, in some way, very
clear in color? and rulings and births and cliffs
of light, and capricious gifts, and aerated warbles

of venereal ointments, and jealous vigilant,
flexible spaces of sauce,? therefore:
does the outline parallel? the essence? Look

again: larval scenario of liquid ecstasies,
acidity of snuffed thought, zootypical, concerned
with possession this is all you possess.

To be the only one to possess what is possessed,
What can we use? poor archaic patrimony
of things, of utensils, decent

symbol of resignations and ties! Do
stones belong to all? I mean do they
ever belong to anyone. The stones? they love silence

in silence. Stones structure the hiss
and the trajectory. How many centuries
are bound in stones? and they never cry,

never bleed: they marry the shade, and disown it,
they marry the wind, the force, the calm, everything...
maybe human laws are made of stone?

Stones are harsh laws on the terrain
and in the air and after conquering the stones,
the universal catch begins here...

fish the moon in the ditch with the rake, quick
wise eager hand, and what a big moon! that
of the great popular nights and the grey

fog in the unique heart of the bat,
of the lovers in public gardens,
or maybe the big moon of the well of cats of ditches?

or that of the stokers and train engineers,
of tides? or that of that evening
in the glass of grappa and on the roof's edge?

or that of Venice, of the cinematographer,
or, if of blood, the one in the literary
skulls or reflected in the spectrograms and trembles

on the sleepless horns of roe deer? or the one
on the express without a country or numbers
nailed to the signal booth at the border in the snow?

or on the shining limestone of cathedrals
where ants flatten and drill through
seeds of bermuda grass, or else

the sentimental one in the hermetic hearts
of warriors and warmongers?
Oh excellent moon, sure, the essence mirrors...

and blows the unsuspecting dust of your smile
toward the other side of every future, beyond every
place where future time disappears,

and the idol of Amorgos¹⁰ on the unbending
stalk in the amorous deceit stares at
the essence of an incredible sail, and I mean,

is there, in the untouched breasts beyond every
future time, a gash where the unsuspecting dust
of your smile runs screams and settles

without lessening further? it's a grain, merely
a grain of wheat stolen from endless
bushels of chaff across the energetic

universe: and if you search for it you'll search
though a prodigal eternity: you'll find it when
the warm noise of empty time subsides.

13

[dia]thèmes sur l'air adhaesit anima, vivicafi secundum

nous a confié l'instar du verbum dans un prisme [or]oral
it was a harmoniastic octopus, a deliberate archetype in the theme
of calcification 1° les gencives orageuses

et les lèvres ombrageuses
in Italian: plexus sides arabesques selvages frames
profiles *trefilati* moorish ashlaros rosettes etc. etc.

2° les grandes incertitudes appliquées sur l'im-
minence séduite du sperme-gauche

idest 3° la fin raisonnée des mots-machine-came-
carambole-hypothème à serrure mi-raison

alors pourpar l'émotion raisonnée l'organisme
oultre le jour nuit oultre la vérité qui tomba
sous l'hégémonie de la perception, et donc

onomatéeillez : a) le chaos (X)
b) la vélocité négative (-v) c) l'énergie négative,
c.à.d. qui est qui est le quiète le avant le repos (-j)
d) la lumière négative |et| qui n'est ni l'aurore ni
l'obscur ni la soif ni l'éclat ni la plaie ni

subdivisez, pour amuser Einstein, la masse incidentelle
occidentelle
excidentelle
accidentelle

agacez la hiérarchie mécanique [et] déhiscente
des chaos assemblés
comme qui
les turbines et les bielles et les cames
c.à.d. *e l'è bel e l'è bun e l'è gram*
e l'è gram cume un cural
*viva la machina del gias artificial*¹¹

l'éternité commestible / avec qui qui / avec am
les chances de l'improbable absolu [-t]
le thème du tempstems [-t^t] et la cendre

eructée de vertèbres méphitophéliques |t^t|
h

on arrache les envergures secrètes des espaces
des futures enventures

parcourir les tunnels ananalyser les éponges urbanistes

pincer les shrapnells enterrés

entraîner *sur les bancs du noir du zéro* tous
les monstres – rameaux du blafard
explosioisifs trironiques engendrés par l'illustre
communion des communions des gros sexes anonymes et
tous les sexes de genre x y z... n... et
de genregenre –x –y –z... –n et!

oh là là! chaosagète bascogne!

chaosagète bascogne	ouestgond
guascogne	vache blonde
gascoko	quartz de gomme
euzkon-con	gouache chome
euzkara	oeufs de gland
	hache de sonde
	culdequelconque
	bascule oignon
	arche de carogne

les scories

de noir oxhydriques chlorhydriques
noirmère noirpère noirfou noirsuie
noirnue noirnoyau noirpluie
noirsoit noirsouffle noirsoul
noirneige noirsuitefuite noirnul

nous sûmes vraiment décider la science-mensonge
rhapsodique, l'eidoloyatrie-convulsive
moi conconnaît les crucruthèmes bifides
les mythèmêmes trifides
les blasphèmes fifides
la pantomême infide

et le fourchettes catapulte charrue aéromètre boomerang
tomahawk CGE, RKO, cetera

les morphèmes vi-vides
les théorhèmes avides
les myephèmes midides
les choeurs épiquequodermiques
du stéatopyge
du mélampyge
du yacintopyge
du leucopyge

pyge pyge pyge sur les épaves rohoeurpyge
noirnoir des voixons subtilisées
jusqu'au NUL qui est bien l'outre ou l'autre

il faut donc: tautomatiser l'essentiel du chaos par des siens
par d'hyperseinsthèmes entrouverts
par des fonctions perdûment inattendues
par des mappes aurraurales
par des axes floraisons
au fond de la pluie grise de la protosensitivity
(frappe à l'intérieure antérieure de la matière)

par des axes figurals par des saxes ensemencés
par des sexes homogénéisés par des astrolabes
récitales par des doigts par des stygmates
minérales par des dagues par des excès numeral
par des dès par des itérations germinales par des plaies

par descendre des scories des épaves d'horizon
à la puissance n à l'ancienne inquiétude olive
des expertises pures aux vectors maximums!

dans le ruine dans le gel dans le grande bagarre
du grand tour entre nacre et ardoise
réveillons sous les portes blondes les daletths
multipliés de lithium en hélice, corpus-noise,
par ex-simple

le matin répandait sa fraîcheur gothique
sur le entures, mes amies
fidèles étant toutes attentives, ensevelies

dans le fémur d'Apollon
je ne pouvais pas les exciter par les doigts
ni par les dès vifs

il faut dinciser le code, donc, à n (haine)
impulsion très égales
pour saisir les cendres les scories les épaves
du grand cliché négatif corpus noir
des grandes issues roulantes!

inventer attendre échouer

la flèche toujours interrompue
par la cendres

par les encidentrails exléctriques
 et scories
 magnétiquistiques
 tique tyché corpus noir
 (ruins, and never heard soul deeper than a deep
 population as it goes to ruin)

 la guêpe zigzagante effrayant corpus noir
 englouti pourpar la merveille
 le solsoleil-perdrix- dans-dans le blé blond

 le pornophème sépulcral s'exhalant sex-haleine
 sur la dioriteurite en fleur
 le choeur-araignée
 sur les ailes des logis cinématiquistiques
 tique tyché / tyché croque-mitaine

jusqu'à ce que l'unité l'émotionnelle soit reduite
 à la mesure d'un biblionème de poil de trou de cul

de guêpe zigzagante sur l'épi

il faut diviser ébranler diminuer le nul dans le nul
 et ainsi soit-il voilà la formule:

$$\begin{array}{rcccl}
 \text{dérisoire} & & X (X \text{ --- } I) & & \\
 ! = & = & & = & ! \\
 \text{inébranlable} & & 2^h & &
 \end{array}$$

14

fields herbs earthquakes etc. everything as it was
 as it was for everyone etc. stubble and barrages
 where rosy-red finger mornings go to subside,
 and the shriveled limbs dampened by
 or adolescents or half and half, *quinto dato ricevü*
*quindes donn fan quindes cü*¹², and green: *verde que*
*verde que yo*¹³ and in fertilizer dry or on tap

y yo quiero rojo, y muslos para el lumbre
y pájaros de besos y nombres de pájaros
de besos y medidas de pájaros de besos
y medidas de pájaros de besos de brisas, ah
que yo quiero, in the meadows, along the overpasses, and
 the escarpments, where someone quibbles out loud:
 kill dig thresh suffer and the entire

popular vocabulary in a downpour
parmi la jeunesse des écoles générales (it seems to me)

where skeletons suddenly stand 12 m. high in the milk crust
of the confidential uncompleted fog, in the catalog
of human works, skeletons of iron fish with bolts,
and copper veins, *ah que quiero*, of high tension

and in the end they declared, rather solemnly, that *l'amore
e farem come fa il pesce, l'amor senza mutande
non lo farem mai più*¹⁴, at that time everyone heard
then out of an very natural intimate obligation
the obscure Socratic blood battling in the arteries
of sparrows and alarmed numbers, together with
the rusty blade of pocket knife in a hole,
or a scythe, and pieces of tracks and farmer's clogs

ah, que yo quiero verde y rojo, sponge cake!¹⁵

and in the zenithal recesses a lone radiophonic
syllable, and in the unthought of vocabulary
of that stone there, or in the arrow of the car horn
that with lines of sugar the goddamn womb of celestial
snags above the nape, or on the orthogonal
routes, on the stubborn analysis of a dynamic
cone, just like an antiquated but brilliant grace the idea
of Italian bosoms celebrates the presence and consumes it

*Dico de te, Ytalya subjecta, dico
de te*,¹⁶ pale place in the sun,
touristy, slave of nations, scant
people, green people, and ancient sober
tone in every class, in every sex, in every
sense, discreet. And lighting bolts of mica
and zigzag flashes or pomegranates or spike

or tip of rye of oat in a herringbone pattern
grama nettle for buttocks in the day of mounting
opprobrium bermuda darnel and sunny famine

15

around the time some sort of cartilage from an awkward time falls
come the clamor and concert and the wrath of the black trumpets

and egg eyes jewels and
 crammings egg eyes jewels and
 + grateful dark drive VIRUS +
 and old VIRUS as infinitive eyes =
 as Select Souls in dwelling of
 of WEST MATTER WEST HIGH WEST
 as old Furies of the Philosophy
 of the Socratic Hope and Surplus
 with grateful Night's Pole in the lung
 of a mad horse
 and instantaneous VIRUS
 and sky of the GREAT VIRUS

17

that's it that's it that's it
 that's it that's it
 from a panoramic urban
 ridge you see meridian spirit gasp with concerts with ample
 jurisdictions with evangelical collisions that lick the frames and the smallest
 edges of silence with mouth open and finally
 on the tables planks high-back chairs thrones stalls stools chaises longues the
 blended flowering of the common mentality and the brilliant
 and scrambled game of steps of flurries of telephone
 books of ceiling prices of advertising billboards and the air,
 then, THAT'S IT, the air in the syllables of Tarquato's¹⁷ octave
 on the Gianicolo¹⁸, oh, that's it, this yes, and
 that's it
 that's it
 nothing slides anymore in the great universal voice in despair, except
 the brief cherished voice of Italian poets, Alfonso Gatto¹⁹, or
 that of Montale²⁰, of the pederast Sandrino²¹, brief whistle
 in statu erecto, and nothing is revealed if not the arid shell
 of vocal reflections and the loftiest vestibule of the original carbonic

¹⁸ The *Gianicolo* is a hill lying behind the neighborhood of Trastevere, in Rome. The entire city can be seen from its Piazza Garibaldi, which is lined with marble busts of many famous Italians.

¹⁹ Alfonso Gatto (1909-1976) was a prominent member of the “Hermetic School” of Italian poets operating in Florence during the 1930s and ‘40s. Although never a member of the group, Villa’s first collection, *Adolescenza*, can be said to bear certain stylistic leanings with their work. He also contributed articles and reviews to the group’s literary journal *Frontespizio*, as well as exchanged a handful of letters with its members regarding the possible publication of his early verse (see introduction, pages 00).

²⁰ Eugenio Montale (1896-1981) was a widely popular 20th century Italian poet, best known for his *Ossi di seppia* (*Cuttlefish Bones*, 1925).

²¹ Probably a reference to the Italian poet Sandro Penna (1906-1977), who, during the late thirties, collaborated with the same literary magazines, mainly *Letteratura* and *Frontespizio*, as Villa.

²² Villa is most likely referring to his contemporary poet, Leonardo Sinigalli (1908-1981). In 1953 he founded the magazine *Civiltà delle Macchine* and served as its director until 1958, years in which Villa contributed a number of curious articles, with topics ranging from art reviews to ship building in Ancient Greece (see bibliography).

3 ideologie da piazza del popolo / senza l'imprimatur
3 Ideologies from Piazza del Popolo / Without the Imprimatur

Imprimatur

evirò con una semplice folata il Terrore Moderno, sputò quindi
la pietra necessaria che aveva trangugiando, commettendo phallo, poi
curva porgeva la tazza degli avvenimenti geologici e
dei freddoloni popolari, adorni di poesia diplomatica, e nell'Onnivoro

ibi et ubique

grembo rovesciava delle immagini inalterabili, aliquid inconcussum,
senza stagione senza incontri perentori senza il seme il mite fiatone, e ordinava
che per 40 giorni di 40 notti (perché 40 è un numero Così) dalle Alpi
Probabili, dalle assurde catene prealpine, fino giù giù Giù
alle Tribune Quaternarie, a ciascuno venisse ripartito Tanto Universo
quanto ne può lavorare la testa di un uomo homunculus
che ha perduto il fiatone e il capolinea e il senso dei recuperi

oh, amazzone blugins, cosa corri dietro per vicoli ai Ghiganti
caduti nell'Ontario, con un tonfo, con il cordone
ombelicale penzolante! cosa! perché, quasi certamente,

ibi et ubique

era: la Grande Grande Grande Glissade
dans la solidi-fication dans la désolidari-sation
de l'Inéxecuté Spécial, ma douce douce douce Gomorrhe!

pour le Chien du Ciel égorgé et
dont l'Éclat terrifie, dolcissima Gomorrha, dolce
organo, esiguo
orifizio per un Ostensorio dell'Eterna loquela,

e fontana del Singhiozzo deperito che vigila con l'autorevolezza
di una sciabola musicale, come se ubriaca avesse da squarciare
in quattro porzioni assai bene distinte l'avvento dell'ira Generalizia,
quella cosa che si guarda per la prima volta, una sola volta,
e una volta per sempre, poi basta

ça c'est qu'il disait d'avoir bien reçu de Sodome
accroupie le Sens donné sombre mutilé
peuple énergique des... ! mon peuple au carcan
le présent reste Mais

en s'exhaussant rejoindre le Souffle
de la bête divine Paroxysme Invective
des jaillissements novenaux
des réflexions arides d'Holocaustes
collatéraux et le fait émerger
rejeton, mystérieuse Vigilance
de l'épée des Syllabes qui gardaient les Liens

dolores quasi dolores quasi dolores

pour un hymne-guérison
épithète primorialique qui
sur la trame-songe des archanges
des grandes Hantises du jour chargées
d'amphores de cendre de victimes splendides
isolées
chacun sa cognée, Démolisseur
méprisant, chacun sa lignée
ténébreuse madornale confidence
sur les tartables
ibi et ubique
terre terre terre! écoute
le souffle d'Un homme comme d'Un Homme
qui niche au milieu des couronnes
de la Grande Grande Métacalypse

e adesso? adesso chi esorcizza più farine e la carne e i cestoni
di verdure? Oh, verdeggiante Pinus Pinea
intorpidita di sensitive parusie, all'ordine dell'universa
potatura, la frondosa
chioma noi come procella i suoi carmi segreti
elencando in misurato elenco teologale strazieremo, o i suoi rami
dentro l'acqua del Terrore
Moderno marciranno, inquinata
gola, annosa corona della mezzaluna, addome
sinistro e la solenne
spastica esultante convocazione degli zuccheri erotici
da ogni più recondita stazione cellulare, dai confini
irrimediabili, e con perversa
emozione salutiamo allora il moderato presagio

ibi et ubique

e la Saldezza religiosa e morale di questo nostro popolo
magari confuso come una manciata di arachidi, a tradimento,
o, che dico, di pop-corn: con gli immortali

cieli offesi, o verdeggiante Pinus Pinea,
della madonna e del padreterno, con dentro
gli entropismi evoluti, i gargarismi recitali, e tutte
le cause di annullamento di Matrimonio nei Vari
settori e ceti, svergognati da leggi sismiche assai di pregio,
vendute a prezzi popolari e ribassati, sottocosto, dumping,
con molte le figurine del concorso ecclesiastico, la storia
dei papi e delle vergini descritta
lungheggiando il sinixter digitale, corri a seminare

ibi et ubique

le ceneri giustiziate dell'amoroso inganno, suscitatore
degli ironici celesti ripari, là dove non è più chi assalga,
o, nel fruscio obliquo dei morti, l'anima sorprenda
nelle sue riservate ragioni, e Agisci! è ora, è quasi tardi

oh belles folies	orgueil tyrannies
telles paroles	oublies
lignes cruelles	mot-vase
brisé que je dois	vous donner

ibi et ubique

e quando non appena o poco dopo non si sa quando
la satyra è bell'e finita, convoca tu,
Beniamina, al telefono Vegetale del Terrore
Moderno, che ha perduto quel famoso
volto specifico, le miniere
degli Occhitesticoli, le spirituali
angherie munite regolarmente del sigillo viminale
e segnami tu nella voce marmorea, tra le filiture
dei lastroni che combaciano non si sa bene se sì o se no,
il più tenue spiraglio Messianico, la nostra
impenetrabile creatura Verbale, il termine
scalfito dell'oracolo in diorite, la sillaba, la fiammata

numquid, inclyte, concrepabunt?
artifex pereo! qui nidificabo
in cerebro aspidem et basiliscum
et thoen! ascende igitur et calma
sepulturam Asini
dormientis in gyro saturniae maxillae

eh, carognate e coseturche che succedono sulla basletta

dei terreni irrigui in lombardia in umilia a poma
a malano e in drianza, sulle cunette

sotto la schienadasino del maldivento
della scigheria che fischia nelle carregge
nelle folate indigene di polvere rossa che rompe
qui dalla Siria, le buriane della cultura sportiva
e della maledizione sulla vigna canadese

e tutti ma tutti gli archetipi di procelle che se io
fossi per avventura un meteorologo ammodo, qui, Agirei! Ma chi

ma chi esorcizza più, dicevo! e chi ereno

chestui che parlaveno
con il cuore onaletico di un Linneo?
dâi, diletante, scaraventa il tuo onus, l'esorcismo
astruso patetico rampante, nell'orbita
lirica, il prodigio del lacerato-confuso
e quelli che vanno in moto con il tubo di scappamento aperto,
o quelli che vogliono piantarmi nella schiena come un ortostato bizzarro
il sibilo paonazzo dell'imprimatur, il brivido innocente della curia, no:

quelli invece che in questo istante medesimo finiscono il campionato
funebre, o tracciano diagrammi cinici e titoli di celestiali
remore su e giù per le torbide lavagne:

o il povero cristo che confonde ancora al giorno d'oggi la liscivia
con la lascivia, sì: o anche quelli che dei bene equilibrati
glutei si fanno esimio tamburo per conoscere
le popolazioni nell'ora di caccia e pesca, o del membrum
in statu erecto il vessillo per le orde di Rappresaglia

ibi et ubique

quelle che si sdraiano in un salotto accogliente
per reprimere la condizione, ma segretamente
è per farsi fotografare la fotografia della capigliatura
d'arancio in fotocolor; o quelli che fanno, nel clima
di svanite euforie, del sangue erba o ferro o calcolo
o iattura, e poi non credono più a niente, né
alla fine della prosperità, né ai maggiori
avventurati esotismi del beene e del mamale,
delle destinazioni tassative e dei ricordi storicizzabili,
delle pretese dei desideri dei vantaggi ventilati,

ibi et ubique

e quelli che pitturano con temeraria amarezza i paradossi
sensibili esautorati privi di fondamento, ma tuttavia
colmi di arroganze ipotetiche, tante e poi tante ancora
idee intrecciate come un cesto di tribolazioni bibliche
ragni scorpioni scolopendre e aciduli basilischi;
e quelli che si affidano sempre a un prodotto di grande marca,
tanto nel genere sport, quanto per la musica, e quanto per il caffè
iemenita, e poi magari si stortano l'anulare negli elementi
del termosifone; e quelli infine che onorano la vita
con la Grossolana Allegrìa, con i cross-words, con le matematiche

Sennonché, umanamente discorrendo, qui
alla nostra tenera età, nel gran garbuglio
delle fantasie moderne e delle circostanze, dei
demetriaci prodigi, nella geniale concimaia
degli auguri e delle angosce rimaste in sospeso
con trepidanti eclissi che non si risolvono, chi
forse intravede oltre gli anniversari, oltre l'araldica
catastrofe che ne ingoia tutti? Ma
o dove, o a quale ombelisco ex utero virginali, o dove
potrà ancorare una sua bara gelosa la bara ovale
dell'Italia, clemente pitagorico convoglio, o fitto
gerundio? Acrobata,
evoca tu l'idea concava del Disfacimento, oplà,
pigiando sul Fulcro del Pelvi del Bacino e delle Reni,
e lungo i quattro Fastigi del Vento oscillando, baluginante
preda, oplà! giustiziato! Sotto un altro! e della Somma Scocca

ibi et ubique

è come un qualunque respiro l'ululato che ti scardina,
il fiato energico della sopravvivenza simbolica,
descritta nel sup-tellurico delle crude anatomie
dell'accaduto del decaduto del coinvolto

ibi et ubique

che segnala gli uragani di cui si compone il cervello
policromo della tellina, dell'acino d'uva, del grano
di pepe, del serpe giustiziato in loco,

e come accoglierai, sermone genuino, universale fuoco
del perdono, questa talmente e così così sfogata
proprietà della ragione spesso plebea e libera?

o perfino in altre vigne d'inferno, sperperata
nei lunghi sorrisi di piogge avare, vermino-autunnali?
o in un burrascoso
vino di compassione di grazia di memoria di abbracci
e di vergogne alacri, a due volti? oh, i'm go
per cui (i and go)

diremmo: primo, di comunicare con gli agenti giurati delle tribù
doviziose, e scomunicare gli altri, scambiando se dio vuole merci
infami, ma delicate, e idololatrie da sottilissimi reliquami, come
fosse il piloro di Marilyn Monroe, tanto per fare un esempio esotico,
ma ci sarebbe sempre anche un altro: (but, why, why, christ?!)

ibi et ubique

incidere poi con un magnetofono la vista epigrafica delle dinastie
faliche egizie diadochiche, e i rozzi sentimenti dei sovrani gottosi
e appena istruiti nel sigillo e nel rotolo, nel tempo medesimo
riducendo a silenzio perentorio, e anchilosare perfino, gli scribi
imbecilli che fanno pratica di discipline amministrative di sessi
secondari e relativamente parziali:

ibi et ubique

poi si potrebbe utilizzare senza riprovazione la lettera
del Demolitore per scardinare il portone millenario
di una città praticamente in disuso, o per ampliare a dismisura
un Distretto chiuso da spessi giganteschi falli confinarii,
e per chi volesse passare pesare riposare pensare e proclamare
l'arrivo dell'Uomo Ignoto da Ignote Feacie, e che deve
risiedere nella zona giusta, prevista dai legali
consentimenti delle nuvole dei piccioni delle irrigazioni a tromba
delle ceneri combuste da veneranda ecatombe, è
una testimonianza eccezionale, amen: e sull'altra riva

ci sono i Monotoni precoci sull'altra riva della piazza
delebile; e dinastia anagrafiche penose che datano soltanto
dal penultimo restauro in data 38.15.63 delle mura
disperate, fatiscenti sotto sforzo dei convolvoli, delle
alluvioni locali, nonché delle verdure esilaranti,
i capperi, le ortiche, la vite canadese, le orchidee

potrebbe significare che noi, selvatici e magnanimi
adolescenti del giorno d'oggi, ormai quasi niente più
sappiamo delle nascostissime maledizioni del passato
prossimo, che sono ossi, selci, anatomie, denti

allungati come le ombre della sera, e la ragione
del massacro finalissimo e ceneri relative, del fuoco
indispensabile, delle astute designazioni cerimoniali
operate dall'enigma, dal reggicalze, dalla guêpière:

e le trafelate simultaneità di guerre legalitarie
o di consapevole pace, proprio sul campo della battaglia
Generalizia, menzionata soltanto, per riguardo e per un
ricatto, a fiore di labbra su uno dei cantoni della piazza:
e il sangue viene spedito con coraggio, costantemente, quasi
puntualmente, ma le ingorde infermiere
lo bevono di nascosto nel sud della patria!

e così. E non ci sono più pascoli inteneriti, più reliquie
di santi mastodontici misteriosissimi generosi disumani,
così noi dirigiamo verso l'altissimo immaginario
le nostre tentazioni accurate, il transito
graduale verso una vegetazione le cui forme
dovrebbero svariare secondo le circostanze
secondo i pellegrinaggi le bestemmie le eventualità
corrispondenti; perché vien certo

ibi et ubique

che chi abbandona in malo modo le proprie femmine
dai raggianti ombelichi, a giusto titolo, potrà abbandonare
anche la piazza senza alcuna ragione plausibile, per un improvviso
scarto di questa ingegnosa prudenza, e amen

ibi et ubique

Imprimatur

he emasculated the Modern Terror with a simple gust, then spat
the necessary stone he had gobbled down,¹ committing phallus, and
passed the beveled cup of geological events and
popular weather wimps, adorned with diplomatic poetry, and in the Omnivorous

ibi et ubique

womb overturned some inalterable images, aliquid inconcussum,
without season seed peremptory encounters the meek panting, and ordered
that for 40 days of 40 nights (since 40 is that Sort of number) from the Probable
Alps, from the Absurd pre-alpine range, all the way down down Down
to the Quaternary Tribune, each is assigned as Much Universe
as the head of a homunculus man can till

that lost the panting the end-of-the-line the sense of salvage

oh Amazon bluejeans,² why through allies do you chase Ghiants
fallen into the Ontario, with a thud, with a dangling
umbilical cord! what! why, almost assuredly,

ibi et ubique

it was: the Big Big Big Glissade
dans la solidi-fication dans la désolidari-sation
de l'Inexécuté Spécial, but douce douce douce Gomorrhe!

pour le Chien du Ciel égorgé et
dont l'Ecrat terrife, sweetest Gomorrha, sweet
organ, scant
orifice for a Monstrance of the Eternal locution,³

and fountain of the withered Hiccup that keeps watch with the
authority of a musical saber, as if drunk had to tear
into four rather clear-cut portions the advent of the Generals' wrath,
that thing seen for the first time, one time alone,
and once and for all, then that's it

ça c'est qu'il disait d'avoir bien reçu de Sodome
accroupie le Sens donné somber mutilé
peuple énergique des...! mon peuple au carcan
le présent reste Mais
en s'exhaussant rejoindre le Souffle
de la bête divine Paroxysme Invective
des jaillissements novenaux
des réflexions arides d'Holocaustes
collatéraux et le fait émerger
rejeton, mystérieuse Vigilance
de l'épée des Syllabes qui gardaient les Liens

dolores quasi dolores quasi dolores

pour un hymne-guérison
épithète primorialique qui
sur la trame-songe des archanges
des grandes Hantises du jour chargées
d'amphores de cendre de victims splendides
isolées
chacun sa cognée, Démolisseur
méprisant, chacun sa lignée
ténébreuse massive confidence

sur les tatables
ibi et ubiquae
terre terre terre! écoute
le souffle d'Un homme comme d'Un Homme
qui niche au milieu des couronnes
de la Grande Grande Métacalyse

and now? now who exorcizes anymore flour and meat and crates
of vegetables? Oh, green Pinus Pineae
numbed by sensitive parousia, according to the universal
pruning, the leafy
crown we'll mangle just like a storm his secret song
listing in orderly theological lists, or its branches
will rot in the water of the
Modern Terror, polluted
gulch, age-old crown of the crescent, left
abdomen and the solemn
spastic exalting convocation of erotic sugars
from the most recondite cellular station, from the irremediable
borders, and with perverse
emotion then we salute the moderate omen

ibi et ubiquae

and the religious and moral Resolve of this people of ours
perhaps confused like a handful of peanuts, by betrayal,
or, what am I saying, of popcorn: with offended
immortal heavens, or green Pinus Pineae,
like hell and my ass, containing
evolved entropisms, pre-recital gargles, and all
the cases of Marriage annulled in the Various
sectors and classes, shamed by esteemed seismic laws,
sold at low prices and lowered again, below cost, dumping,
with many figurines from the ecclesiastical contest, the history
of popes and virgins, described
alongside the digital sinixter, run to sow

ibi et ubiquae

the executed ashes of amorous deceit, instigator
of ironic celestial shelters, there where assailants are no more,
or, in the oblique rustling of the dead, let the soul surprise
in its private reasons, and Act! it's time, it's almost too late

oh belles folies
telles paroles

orgueil tyrannies
oublies

lignes cruelles
brisé que je dois

mot-vase
vous donner

ibi et ubique

and when just before or right after no one knows when
the satyra is over and done, you summon,
Beniamina, on the Vegetable phone of the
Modern Terror, which lost that certain
famous appearance, the mines
of the Eyetesticles,⁴ the spirital oppression regularly
equipped with the Viminal seal⁵
and mark me on the marble voice, between the edge
of slabs that touch no one really knows if they do or don't,
the most tenuous Messianic fissures, our
impenetrable Verbal creature, the term
of the oracle, etched in diorite, the syllable, the blaze

numquid, inclyte, concrepabunt?
artifex pereo! qui nidificabo
in cerebro aspidem et basiliscum
et thoen! ascende igitur et calma
sepulturam Asini
dormientis in gyro saturniae maxillae

eh, low blows and unspeakable acts that happen on the double chin
of the irrigated terrain in lombardy in umilia in pome
in malan and in drianza,⁶ on the little hump

under the saddleback of the windache⁷
of the thick fog that whistles in the towpaths
in the indigenous gusts of red dust that irrupts here
all the way from Syria, the tempest of sports culture
of the spell cast on Virginia creepers

and all I really mean all the archetypes of storms that if I
were by chance a well-mannered meteorologist, here, I would act! But who

I was saying, but who exorcizes anymore! and *chi ereno*

*chestui che parlaveno*⁸
with the onalytic heart of a Linnaeus?
Come on, dilettante, hurl your onus, the abstruse
Pathetic rampant exorcism, into the lyrical
orbit, the marvel of the laceration-confusion
and those who ride their bikes with un-muffled exhaust,

or those who want to plant on my back as if were a bizarre orthostate
the purple hissing of the imprimatur, the innocent chill of the Curia,⁹ no:

those instead who in this very same moment finish the funeral
conference, or trace cynical diagrams and titles of celestial
remoras up and down on cloudy blackboards:

or the poor devil who to this very day hears lye
in lascivious, yes: or also those who out of their well-balanced
buttocks make illustrious drums to know
the populations while hunting and fishing, or in the membrum
in statu erecto the banner for the hordes of Reprisal

ibi et ubique

women who lie down in an inviting room
to repress the condition, but secretly
they want to be photographed the photograph of orange
hair in color; or those who turn, in the climate
of vanished euphoria, blood into grass or iron or calculation
or calamity, then they don't believe in anything anymore
neither the end of prosperity, nor the greatest
ventured exoticism of good and evil,
of binding destinations and historicizable memories,
of demands desires and ventilated advantages,

ibi et ubique

and those who paint with rash bitterness divested
sensitive paradoxes without foundation, but yet
brimming with hypothetical arrogance, more and more
braided ideas like a basket of biblical tribulations
spiders scorpions centipedes and acidulous basilisks;
and those who always trust a brand name product,
as much in sports, as in music, as in Yemenite
coffee, and then they'll catch their ring-finger in the
heater's tubes; and lastly those who honor life
with Crude Mirth, cross-words, and mathematics

Except, humanly speaking, here
at our tender age, in the great tangle
of modern fantasy and circumstances, of
Demetrian miracles, in the brilliant hotbed
of wishes and interrupted anguish
with anxious eclipses that can't be solved, who
might see beyond anniversaries, beyond the heraldic

catastrophe that swallows us all? But
or where, or from which umbelisk¹⁰ ex utero virginali, or where
could he anchor his own jealous coffin the oval coffin
of Italy, merciful Pythagorean convoy, or thick
gerund? Acrobat,
you conjure up the concave idea of decay, hup,
treading on the Fulcrum of the Pelvis the Renal Pelvis the Kidneys,
and oscillating along the four Crests of the Wind, flickering
prey, hup! executed! Who's next! and of the Supreme Shell.

ibi et ubique

it's like any sort of breathing the howling that unhinges you,
the energetic breath of symbolic survival,
described in the sub-telluric of crude anatomies
of what's happened what's fallen what's involved

ibi et ubique

that marks the hurricanes composing the polychrome
brain of the clam, the single grape, the pepper
corn, the snake executed on site,
and, genuine sermon, universal fire of forgiveness,
how will you receive this so greatly vented
often liberal and plebian quality of reason?
or even in other infernal vineyards, squandered
in the long smiles of stingy, verminous-autumn rains?
or in a stormy
wine of pity grace memory embrace
and brisk two-faced disgrace? *oh, i'm go*
*hence (i and go)*¹¹

we'd say: first, communicate with the sworn agents of the wealthy
tribes, and excommunicate the others, exchanging god willing rotten,
but delicate, merchandise and ideolatrics¹² from the most subtle relics, as if
it were Marilyn Monroes' pylorus, just to cite one exotic example,
yet there would always be another : (*but why why, christ?!*)

ibi et ubique

then with a reel-to-reel record the epigraphic view of phallic¹³
Diadochic Egyptian dynasties, and the crude sentiments of gouty
sovereigns and barely trained in seals and scrolls, at the same time
reducing to peremptory silence, and even stiffen, the idiotic
scribes who train in administrative disciplines of secondary
and relatively partial sexes:

ibi et ubique

then without disapproval the Demolisher's letter
could be used to unhinge the millenary door
of a city nearly abandoned, or to amplify immensely
a District blocked by thick giant border phalluses,
and for those who want to pass weigh rest think and proclaim
the Unknown Man's arrival from Unknown Phaeacia, who must
reside in the right zone, foreseen by the legal
consents of clouds pigeons waterspouts
the ashes burnt by venerable hecatombs, it's
an exceptional testimony, amen: and on the other shore

of the delibile piazza precocious Monotonous people;
and painful anagraphic dynasties that only date
back to 38.14.63 the last restoration of the desperate
walls, crumbling under the stress of convolvuli, of
local floods, not to mention the exhilarating vegetables,
capers, nettles, Virginia creepers, orchids,
it could mean that we, today's wild and
magnanimous youth, by now almost know nothing
about the hidden curses of the recent
past, which are bones, stones, anatomies, teeth
stretched like the night's shades, and the reason
behind the final massacre and relative ashes, of the
indispensable fire, the astute ceremonial designations
wielded by the enigma, by garter-belts, by the guêpière:

and the breathless simultaneities of legalitarian wars
or of conscious peace, right there on the field of the Generals'
battle, barely mentioned, out of regard and out of
blackmail, murmured in a corner of the piazza:
and the blood is quick in coming with courage, constantly, almost
punctually, but the gluttonous nurses
secretly drink it the south of the fatherland!

and so. And there are no more softened pastures, no more relics
of mysterious generous mammoth inhuman saints,
so we direct our accurate temptations
toward the highest imaginary, the gradual
transition toward a vegetation whose forms
should vary according to the circumstances
according to pilgrimage blasphemy and corresponding
possibility; for it's certain

ibi et ubique

that those who in a huff abandon their women
with radiant belly buttons, and rightly so, could also abandon
the piazza without any plausible reason, out of a sudden
swerve in this ingenious caution, and amen

ibi et ubique

¹ The Italian uses the progressive form *trangugiando* (gobbling down) and is most likely a typo. I have substituted it in the English with the past participle *trangugiato* (gobbled down).

² In the original, Villa combines the words “blue jeans” and spells them phonetically (*blugins*) according to Italian diction.

³ The Italian word *loquela* immediately recalls the work of Dante, especially the pilgrim’s conversation with Farinata in the tenth canto: *La tua loquela ti fa manifesto / di quella nobil patria natio, / a la qual forse fui troppo molesto*. (Inferno X: 25-28). Translations of the term vary: accent, mode of speech, or tongue. However I feel “locution” better captures the nuance of the Italian.

⁴ See introduction, page 134.

⁵ The *Viminale* is one of the Seven Hills of Rome, a top of which lies the seat of the *Ministero dell’interno* (Ministry of the Interior) yet at the time this poem was composed the building also housed the offices of the *Presidenza del Consiglio* (the prime minister and his cabinet), which have since been moved to Palazzo Chigi.

⁶ Here Villa is playing on the names of Italian cities: Umilia (Emilia, humility), Poma (Rome, Pome), Malano (Milano, Malady), and Drianza (Brianza, ?). Only Lombardia (Lombardy) is left untouched.

⁷ In the original *maldivento* sounds similar to *mal di dente* (toothache).

⁸ Roman dialect for “who are these guys who spoke with.”

⁹ *Curia* refers to the papal court in the Catholic Church. This governing did not give Villa their “imprimatur” (their seal of approval) to publish his a-confessional translation of the Hebrew Bible. Although he had signed a contract to print the translation with the prestigious Italian publisher Einaudi, it back out after the papal court’s decision.

¹⁰ A combination of the words “ombelico” (umbilical) and “obelisco” (obelisk).

¹¹ Villa’s original English is marked in italics.

¹² A combination of “ideologia” (ideology) and “idolatrie” (idolatries).

¹³ The Italian reads “faliche” with one “l,” which is most likely a typo. Villa may have intended the adjective “fallico” (phallic) or, given the list of geographical references in these lines, it may be a variant on the adjective “falisco,” referring to the land “belonging to the Etruscan civilization.”

antiquate sonorità
cristiane
pour sex dead tom tom

calcola il corpo innumerevole
sans idéal commun
balance très balance (per le aziende)
balance intégral (per le tenute)
sous la préessence des fruits
des courbures-matière corrompue
alignantes-alignées des matrices
sur les culibrautions spectrales

dans l'après dîner
chaque lundi

et tous les temps et les hauts temps
gémirent se mirant soul les maimains symptômes d'aimour

et sous les mains
le panthéon à hiéroglyphes
irresistibles et demeurés

symptômes
evolués
pour
si je
m'avance
dans l'air sombre

!corps lumbard
corps bastard

inutile
profondo!

huitre-air de la transmanence
huitre-œil

come o non come ma come
i luoghi dei luoghi nel solfeggio
dei testimoni, nel sospiro
idumeo o lesbico o hittita

où sont
les grandes
chiennes
les chênes
de Saul

M
O
T
O
R

dans l'araignée conçue
la gènesse de la grande
corpe
sépanouir lepa-
nouissement sépanouisse

sang lumbard
sang busard

volk ambulaire de thératothèmes
deuxheures
deshakespeares

à l'ouest
le dieu le plus jeune le plus eau
pendant l'ouverture je te baptise

où sont
les abîmes
où sont
les grandes
scènes

à duexheurээр deuxheures
dans le sang de shakespeare
dans les veines alignées

O
L
I

oh, vocali ancora semipagane, cieche
prede, fonti di ossigeno
agli squali, alle passere! semi, oh,
dell'acu
ta pietà, al mu
sico gentile gio
vane convoglio
e conseguenti re
tate, spalancando
di quest'ora tarda
il verso allo sbaraglio
per buonsenso leg
gero e pensosa
economia, con ogni
preesistenza, e il superno
convegno sigillato
nel cavo brucato
della mano indigena.
quale ferita!

e acceso il lume delle indagini
del profondo, noi insieme, con
immobili
e disarticolati ragionari si scommette
due testicoli contro solo una mela
che la vita dev'essere il contrario
della vita e della natura: consumeremo
il fiato fino all'ultima vocale utile

perché siamo un popolo
di lampadine fulminante!
e chi ruba la cenere nei mastelli
e chi frantuma le pipe di gesso,
non sa leggere la mano di pitagora
ne réponds pas

je me présente
devenu
cruel

song for tree
sing for true
sang pour truié
sens fort

autres simptômes

1.000.003

antiquated Christian
resonances
pour *sex dead tom tom*

O
I
L
S

calculates the innumerable body
sans idéal commun
balance très balance (for the
companies)
balance intégral (for the estates)
sous la préessence des fruits
des courbures-matière corrompue
alignantes-alignées des matrices
sur les culbrautions spectrales

où sont
les grandes
chiennes
les chênes
de Saul

dans l'après dîner
chaque lundi

M
O
T
O
R

et tous les temps et les hauts temps
gémirent se mirant soul les maimains symptômes d'amour

et sous les mains
le panthéon à hiéroglyphes
irrésistibles et demeurés

dans l'araignée conçue
la gènesse de la grande
corpe
sépanouir lepa-
nouissement sépanouisse

symptômes
evolués
pour
si je
m'avance
dans l'air sombre

sang lumbard
sang busard

!corps lumbard
corps *bastard*

volk ambulaire de thératothèmes
deuxheures
deshakespeareas

useless
depth!

à l'ouest
le dieu le plus jeune le plus eau
pendant l'ouverture je te baptise

huître-air de la transmanence
huître-œil

où sont
les abîmes
où sont
les grandes
scènes

like or not like but like
the places of places in the solfeggio
of testimonies, in the Edomite
or Lesbian or Hittite sigh

à duexheurée deuxheures
dans le sang de shakespeareas
dans les veines alignées

oh, vowels still semi-pagan, blind
prey, oxygen source
for sharks, and sparrows! seeds, oh,
of the acu
te pity, of the mu
sical gentle ju
venile convoy
and consequent ar
ound ups, exposing
the verse to danger
at this late hour
out of faint wis
dom and thoughtful
economy, with every
preexistence, and the supernal
convention sealed
in the nibbled hallow
of the indigenous hand.
what a wound!

and lit the light for plumbing
the depth, together, with immobile
and disjointed reasoning, we'll bet
two testicles against only one apple
that life must be the opposite
of life and nature: we'll consume
breath until the last useful vowel

because we're a people
of bulbs that burn out!
and those who steal ash in tubs
and those who shatter plaster pipes,
are unable to read the hand of
Pythagoras
ne réponds pas

je me présente
devenu
cruel

song for tree
sing for true
sang pour truite
sens fort

autres simptômes

1.000.003

translatio

*(c.à.d. lecture probable physique sans souci du venir
d'aspic jéroglyphe stylé dans l'obélisque de la place)*

Vu le Code Sacramental
sur la Place de l'Équité,
les Bêtes à Cornes
sur la Barque des Couilles,
les Gâteaux des Morts
sur les Textes des Apodòseis
pour Petites Conditions
de la Nourriture Idéale,
 enfin
le grand Marathon du vice
multiplié par ... [lacune :
peut-être, un dieu de conscience] un arbre
doux, aux yeux-rejetons, sensibles
parentés,

bien !

peut-on calomnier les dieux
du Vice ? faire pleurer les Souffrances
sans parenté, au moment où le Trope éternel
replie sur soi-même comme un diadème
de Cendre, et Nouvelles heures surgissent
rédigées proliférantes équivoques débordantes
mon Astre inoui ?

 j'Attends
aux saturnales expiatoires, dans le Ventre
salutaire noir du psaume, ton Triomphe,
chaos héroïque mon Astre ennui,
 Cœur dissimulé...
et les Phases que je sème pour qui s'aiment
qu'un autre les dévore.

comizio millenovecentocinquanta3

di andare ancora giù giù giù al tempo scarnito dei cristiani di polvere
e le strofe bislacche e sui polsini le sigle fruste
sui calcagni

con le solfe
e le stole
e che

al tempo scarnito dei cristiani
le pattone inondate, arrosées,
mangia come canta, canta come mangia
la musica nella camola, si si,

che guardando solo in alto tendere e distendere
dove sguazza il ragno, qui uno
e che sospetto di aver carpito
la musica, e l'indicibile

frangia tutta bassa e minimissima, sulla curva del barbosso,
tondo, e poi le rare
sfavillando e sfavellando i giorni che pioveva l'idrico

respiro e volo
Itaglie
fitto sull'amido

e sul fustagno e sui sassi sybillini e con moderni
il sereno, mentre noialtri
onestamente parlando coi ginocchi, passi
ginocchi come chi si tappa le orecchie con la scapola, a eccelse ruote, confuse un po', al largo
dei labirinti e degli specchi maestri, in subaffitto
dello sbuffo della quaglia negli occhi del chimerico OZONO!

toni sbranava
si parlava unitamente
dietro passi, coi
si parlava

nel chimerico suono dei cristiani
piramide degli accenti e delle note, nel
che tocca l'oltresuono, l'oltredove
scaccia la stremata ideazione,
balla il poiano: l'odore librato
il corso dell'aria fina, ferma e grama,
polla e palta tinta, e tira
e una robinia con rugiada, e nelle remote
giganti della boria lombarda
rada in un pugno:
tra frasca e frasca e frasca della Penisola e dall'Olla ovale

a chimeriche quote, nella cruda
brio e nella brina di lattuga
la pertica misura e il ragno
e non udito, les oiseaux du ciel, in fuga
di benzina che ripete
un gran canale, un bagno dall'inferna
e molla, una gran strada, la gran falla
Valve i sospiri
e la borrasca impietra
e con luce sgranellata, a galla,

che s'incrina salta fuori la cicoria molla, la teppa; e il cuore dei porri

e la paglia, e il ciuffo di menta, a filigrana
e sù e giù per le segame una lamentosa uretra,
scorre la Patria come una volpe dietro la strusa annusando dal grugno
est, polpa assonnata di parvenze di parole d'anima infusa,

lisa, a ipotenusata
e inalberata
le breccie del muretto

quando offerta e azione, supplica e sacramenti, zucchero e odore di merda e saformenti

tagliano venti e si infilano

e nella casa vana restano soltanto le boccole salve
sul cuscino, e il centopiede
restano solamente gli ori i cani la paglia e spicchi
alacri, segnale della eccellente convalescenza

color granata, di vetro,
assassinato; e nella casa
secchi d'aranci, e ragnatele
e ormai, ormai

nelle putrelle di ghisa e nelle scodelle
della vita tradizionale sociale normale
il ritmo delle zoccole sulle buche

delle libazioni
e familiari

degli inizi
in giro ai cavicchi si stempera
e contro i due calcagni

il sismico premito della formica
luce non parlata, non generata orazione
la polenta, gli aggettivi, le congiunzioni salivate,

delle festuche
sul filo di ferro
i verbi perfino!

della perfetta
che taglia in due
stereofonici, i verbi,
radicitus citus tus,

vocali e quelle digitali volgarmente mischiate alla calcina calda e sul terreno
quale ovipara musica! magnetica e le impronte
che squaglia, le schiene d'asino le carregge il morso
prodigo
delle caligini dinastiche dei fulmini adatti a tirare dai sassi sybillini sangue occulto
e mazzi di cicoria, e senza furia

senza cor d'olio senza sorriso ma con cinerea
d'intelletto e devozioni

di bestia

già cul atoria far segni
spisciolando tempeste

sulla spranga e si sfalda
la spavalda intima gemma sola della paura in orecchie abissali dei manzi ammattiti o matti,
e strusciano le baggiane i fregoni sullo stemma sulle soglie sui piatti e le padelle, esorciste
per Nergal l'Anaconda che avanza sui canestri dell'alba dal nudo asilo che lo ingenera, e, oh, rutili

cartilagini di Itaglie e d'altre terre teppiste, rinvergate! e a nuoto negli occhi muti
delle vipere l'onda annoda della flemma della luce e il transito sbircia della quaglia gioconda
e le caligini dynastiche sposa ai venturi occhi inviolati,

e spurgo di anime da iella nella cruenta limpidezza delle piste,
e là per dove il prevosto baccagliando al cane scortica la coda
masticando l'eucharistica membrana di formentone giallo
sotto il baldacchino degli estrosi cirri in gara, a vista, e spacca, trac,
il cervelletto alla lucertola impenitente, un filo in trepida amara

sede di od rosa maglia di anice di grappa e di naftalina, e odore
di fegato di merluzzo e di carogne nel vestibolo delle narici e lungo il torace
brivido d'incenso, trame fischiate di camole di arredi nella foresta sottogonna del corpuschristi,

uguaglia l'incanto incendiato dei Patti Massimi: oh, albero
di avvenenza Speleofonica, albero del Precetto, di ladra
eideia, di fonda chiacchiera, che il sangue in Itaglia non lava
le soglie e i marciapiedi, ma il chianti su uno straccio di tovaglia nuziale
appena che libato impiastra di rosso il sale e le freguglie di pane, e il coppino, buon augurio,
che se la goda a darci dentro! e uno allora, diceva la rava e la fava, e che eh no, eh no,
eh no, eh no!
eh sì, sociofugo
eh, assimilatore...

se ghe scapa la caca de sgnapa ghe se scepa la ciapa del bus del cù, del peritoneo! e uno allora

per Due Coltelli e Tre in fondo al lago inan ellato
ragiona a gran fatica in mezzo ai sassi sybillini nei laceri
bindelli della celeste tovaglia, con i crampi

e il gomito che scotta quando per i campi scaglia a dieci
venti la fionda verso dove non ci si vede più

ai dieci nudi
e innescata è la sera:

ma: albero geodetico, fiuto dello stratetime fedele,
avvenenza, negli scudi che il nubilo, sù e giù, sparpaglia,
stravagante, a spasso, sù e giù, sulle finestre sulle croste sulle tibie sopra i cuoi sopra il lattime
delle guance nella cagliata e nella coppa a fare opachi stampi
carezza e lente spire, e dura scorza alle gibigiane:
sgargia la livella del T e B: e domani, ma domani,

albero di galeotta
e tempo
e malinconica
rotta, così,
il candore

che entra come un temperino nudo, come una carognata, la gemma della paura o dello sfizio,
di manduria dentro il lago, e ma domani sarà una gran bella giornata! un gemito
dentro i testicoli, lungo, e nostalgia della sua cenere

un gotto
e ma domani

più nisciuno in questa scura foppa sa più bene se la pietra permansiva
e immemore in immemore equilibrio starà sopra la pietra,
o sull'arcata delle spalle i pensamenti a grani con tutta
quella catabrega di figlioli a precipizio
dell'uomo che ha mangiato di straforo il pànico vitale, sussidio
delle comunità, delle fabbricerie, dei sindacati, delle tribù...
tarlate da un acume propizievirole
sforbiciato da molteplici scaramanzie, come l'albero
ignaro, svelto
tra il nubilo e il tempaccio nazionale e internazionale, il frullo
e la chiarezza in equilibrio immemore, una fetta
qui nessuno bene sa la lippa come un cazzo catorcio o qualunque
baldanzoso orifizio, ecc. ecc.

e la legge
e il lume
nel rameggio
di buontempo,
mulìn mulèta
ghe se slunga la tèta!

qui le piaghe d'Itaglia si curano con lo sputo, il leccalecca
universale, e lecca il Verde Rame delle palanche, e si curano
con la glykyrhiza linnaei, o regolizia che dir si voglia, oh jeus jeus

del christ, un bacio,
el azucar me mandega
el cocoron del cacio!

potrà per dentro in cinerei cereali una re voluzione
ardentemente? dove per i sacri
ancora scarseggiano le acque insaziabili,
canali, senza vene disegnate in croce, o i
intellettuali pro capite, o la festa
brusco, a tono, in coro, tanti argomenti tutti insieme in una volta unica?
due tori si battono nel cuore della poiana! per uno
che comincia così che finisce così, che sa e non sa le larve dei coiomi,
che non sa se dare del tu o del ti
sui carri di cenere itineraria negli imi
e così sembra, e così sia

crepitare

alberi
senza
barlumi
del carpire

ardenti cunicoli,

di là da tutte le facce d'anime impappinate del purgatorio, di là
dalle ultime palizzate, riverenza e scatto, di là dai polmoni della vacca
dove i fiori del girasole crepano senza un lamento, per cui
si capisce l'orrore interno e lo scabroso
e si sa bene le dita in croce del coma e della paralisi e dell'ingonia,
a mulinello, si sa le occhiaie inviperite tra le felci e sulle traiettorie del piombo, e si sa
dove il poiano becca col becco l'ultima sentenza di sangue universale
e si sa le bucce dei sabati scaricati sottoterra o tra diademi di marroni infornati
da ingerire, e sui calcestri tra le gobbe nelle cucce tra le larve per le vene eccetera
rovistare mentre nell'ombra del coppino
si adagia una pinza d'acciaio il maggiolino
bagnato nel vino gnucco e nel sale paonazzo lo spappola che s'impiastra
ci ha messo sù putiferio baracca saformento e porcudighel, e si placano
i due tori nel cuore della poiana di Sesso Calende,

palpito, per cui,
e i pollici

mite e losco
e il dito imparziale
e allora

le cineree

impronte digitali sfregate sulla mezzanotte, e storciti
capovolgiti, lampeggia, Maestà della Poiana! se, allora, raccolta

nella nazione l'universa febbre, spesso, con un mestolo incontaminato, per lungo
 ribrezzo allora impietra l'Alto Abdomen dell'Abdomeneddio!
 gremito di magoni, di rancori giulivi, di singhiozzi, di sgraffi,
 di letanie senza testo, irrespirabili, e obliquamente
 le salme degli alti Cani cinerei ansimano incorrotti in punta alle canne
 fluttuando e l'ecumène
 dei bulbi pieno e vuoto vidima il potere e il nonpotere dell'Onnipotente
 genuino, alleato al tenero delirio nell'inedia e allo schianto
 furtivo, elegiaco, delle erotiche asce, e degli stipiti deperiti a colpi d'anca,
 a sbatti e molla e lasciandare che il cielo appartiene!

e nelle rocce di tenebre ti si strozzano i lividi precipizi le sideree fiumane i rari
 riflessi per somme linee e i prè saghi
 tedeum e l'unghia incarnata delle estasi dentro le cortecce
 del gelso e l'occhio estirpato alla sua roccia, immoto
 sugli oziosi scandagli, ebete vendetta fino a che
 la fanfara di carruba intonerà a pelo d'aria, scrocchiando, l'era nuova,
 l'era bicipite, delle diavolerie fonetiche, i neumi palinsesti
 dal foro dell'uovo di una syllaba clandestina solitaria esimia tenue caduca urbana generosa
 lunga e carnale come il corpus della separazione e dell'uguaglianza: e nella cuna
 tonda, come dei due orecchi del manzo, del padiglione dell'orecchio tra timpano e martelletto
 rugando, fiorisce il cembalo insonne lanceolato degli espressi di frontiera, e il polverone
 stormendo si avventa fuori orario dei camion, e il senso, a distanza,
 delle luci gemelle nelle orecchie, perpetuo, somnesso attimo e baleno
 dei Novissimi: cioè, una vallata, a canestri, di albe immolate
 dall'amor delle anime, dal suffragio indenne
 delle larve e dei cognomi pellegrini oltremondani barbari nazionali necessari sovietici o giudei
 uno che incomincia così, che finisce così, darà agli incendi
 l'Uccello di apollo e le cosce di santa Creatura, maschia o femmino,

oh, ignaro, oh gelido oh decrescente talamo dei nostri aliti
 a ridosso, scapola a scapola! omelia e smalto e muscolo
 del sortilegio paraclitico, esalando, in virga verbi,

ti fulmini, o sancta ecclesia, novero ecumenico, informe
apocalisse vocalizzata e suggellata con labbra inerti, tra le vigne
ti fulmini: uno stupore idolologico, ma maligno, e una rissa
aspra di cieli incenerisca il satanico peplo, il pascolo, e il nubifragio.

nineteen-fifty3 rally

and going further down down down to the scrawny time of dusty christians with raves
and odd rants and worn-out monograms on the cuffs and stoles
down to the heels and that

to the scrawny time of christians who look only on high to lean and stretch
the drowned *pattone*¹, arrosées, where the spider splashes, here you
eat like you sing, sing like you eat and a suspicion of figuring out
the music in the maggot, yes yes, the music, and the unspeakable

fringe all low and tiny, on the *barbosso*'s² curve, breath and circular
flight, and then the rare Itaglie³
beaming and blabbering the days when the hydric rained heavy on the starch

and the corduroy and sybilline⁴ stones and with modern tones mangled
serenity, while the rest of us we spoke in unity
in honesty speaking with our knees, step after step, with knees
like those who cover their ears with their shoulder blades, for celestial wheels, a bit confused, deep in
the labyrinths and the master mirrors, subletting we spoke
of the quail's panting in the eyes of the chimeric OZONE!

in the chimeric sound of christians at chimeric heights, in the crude
pyramid of accents and notes, in the zest and frost of lettuce
touching the beyondsound, the beyondwhere the perch measures and the spider
drives away exhausted ideation, and unheard, les oiseaux du ciel, fleeing
the buzzard⁵ dances: the soaring odor of gasoline following
the course of subtle air, still and wretched, a grand canal, a bath from the infernal

spring and tainted mud, and in the
and a dewey robinia, and in the remote
sighs of lombard pride
barren in a fist:

about the bush, about the bush, about the bush⁶ across the Peninsula and from the oval Olla
that cracks wet chicory and moss leaps; and the heart of leeks

end, a grand road, the grand breach
Valves the giant
and the storm petrifies
and with grainy light, floating,

and straw, and a sprig of mint, with worn
and up and down the rye a lamenting urethra,
the Fatherland flows like a fox after a scent sniffing from the snout
wall, sleepy pulp of appearance of words of infused soul,

filigree, as a hypotenuse
and incensed
the holes in the eastern

when offer and action, plea and sacrament, sugar and smell of shit and saphorment⁷
cut winds and squeeze through

and in the inane house remain only saved bushings
on the pillow, and the murdered
remain only dogs hay jewelry and dry slices
cobwebs, sign of excellent convalescence

granata in color, in glass,
centipede; and in the house
of oranges, and busy
and by now, by now

in the cast iron joints and cups
of traditional social normal and
the rhythm of rats⁸ over holes

for libations
familial life

of the beginning
around the pegs fades
and against the heels

the seismic spasm of the ant
unspoken light, un-generated oration
in half, adjectives, salivating conjunctions,

of hay
on the wire
and even verbs!

of the perfect
that cuts polenta
stereophonic, the verbs,
radicitus citus tus,

prints and fingerprints coarsely mixed in the warm mortar and on the ground
such oviparous music! magnetic and voice-
that melts, saddlebacks reins the prodigal
bit

of dinastic⁹ fogs of lightening suited for drawing occult blood from sybilline stones
and bunches of chicory, without rushing

without the heart of oil without smile but with ashen
of intellect and devotion
on the staff
the arrogant intimate lonely gem of fear in the abyssal ears of maddened or mad steers,
and the *baggiane* rub the *fregoni* on the crest¹¹ on the thresholds over the plates and in the pans, exorcists
for Nergal¹² of the Anaconda advancing across the baskets of dawn from the naked shelter that generates it, and, oh, rutil

ejà cul atory¹⁰ making signs
pissing tempests
and it crumbles

cartilage of Itaglie and other thuggish lands, rediscovered! and swimming in the mute eyes
of vipers of phlegm of light the wave knots and the transit of playful quail glances
and marries dinastic fogs to future untouched eyes,

and the purging of souls of bad luck in the bloody clarity of tracks,
and there where the quarreling priest flays the dog's tail
chewing the eucaristic¹³ membrane of yellow corn
under the canopy of whimsical cirri in a race, in view, and breaks, crack,
the cerebellum of the impenitent lizard, a thread in the quivering bitter

seat of scented¹⁴ knit of anise grappa and mothballs, and smell
of liver cod and carcass in the vestibule of the nostrils
shiver of incense, whistled weaves of maggots of furniture in the forest under the skirt of corpuschristi,

and along the thorax

equals the incinerated incantation of the Maximum Pacts:
of Speleophonic¹⁵ comeliness,
eidyia¹⁶, of deep chatter, so blood
doorsteps and sidewalks,
as soon as swallowed smears the salt and breadcrumbs with red, and the ladle, good omen,
enjoys going all out! and then one, said this that and the other, and that,

oh, tree
thieving
doesn't wash

the tree of the Precept, of
in Itaglia
but the chianti on a shred of nuptial tablecloth

oh no, oh no,
oh no, oh no!
oh yes, sociofugal¹⁷
oh, assimilator...

if he has to crap schnapps, he'll shred the side of his ass, the peritoneum! and then one

reasons with great difficulty among sybilline stones
about Two Blades and Three at the bottom of the en ringed¹⁸ lake
shreds of the celestial
and a burning elbow when through the fields the sling
the naked winds where you can't see anything anymore

in the torn
tablecloth, with cramps
hurls ten by ten
and the evening is triggered:

but: geodesic tree, a nose for faithful extra-time,
comeliness, in the shields scattered by clouds, up and down,
time, strolling, up and down, on the windows on the scabs on the tibias over the hides and over the sickly honeycomb
of cheeks¹⁹ in the curd and in the cups to form opaque stamps
caress and slow spirals, and thick skin for the blinding glare:
the level of T and B²⁰ flares: and tomorrow, but tomorrow,
that enters like a naked pocket knife, like a dirty trick, the gem of fear or the whim,

tree of seductive
and extravagant
and melancholic
broken, like that,
the candor
a drop

of manduria²¹ in the lake, yes but tomorrow will be one hell of a day! a long
whimper in the testicles and nostalgia of its own ashes

yes but tomorrow

nobody no more in this dark ditch knows if the permansive²² stone
obliterated in obliterated equilibrium will remain on top of the stone,
or if granulated thoughts on the arcade of the shoulders with all
that noisy bunch of children at breakneck speed and the law
of man who has slyly eaten the vital panic, subsidy
of communities, of *fabbricerie*,²³ of unions, of tribes...
worm-eaten by a propitious acumen and the light
snipped by multiple superstitions, like the unsuspecting
tree, nimble in the branching
between clouds and the national and international bad weather, the whir
and the clarity in obliterated equilibrium, a slice of good weather,
here nobody knows the tipcat like a jalopy cock or any other
prancing orifice, etc. etc. mill milly
her titty looks silly!²⁴

here the sores of Itaglia are cured with spit, the universal
lollipop, and it licks the Green Copper of coins, and they're cured
with glykyrhiza linnaei, or licorresse²⁵ whatever you want to call it, oh jeus jesus

of krist, a kiss,
el azucar me mandega
el cocoron of cheese!

can a re volution burn ardently inside
cereal? Where for the scared
there still isn't enough insatiable water,
canals, nor veins drawn in a cross, nor the
glimmers per capita, nor the party
understanding, in spades, in chorus, so many arguments all together all at once?
two bulls clash in the heart of the buzzard! for one
who begins like this ends like that, who barely knows the larvae of cojones,
who doesn't know whether to use 'you' or 'ye'
on the carts of itinerary ash in the deep
and that's how it seems, and so be it

cinereous
trees
nor
intellectual
for the rude
ardent tunnels,

beyond all the floundering faces of souls in purgatory, beyond
the final fences, reverence and pounce, beyond the cow's lungs
where the sunflowers die without a sound, and so
you understand the internal horror and the scabrous

throb, and so,

you know very well the fingers crossed over coma paralysis and ingyony²⁶
in a twiddle, you know infuriated bags under the eyes amid the ferns along the trajectories of led, and you know
where the buzzard pecks with its beak the final sentence of universal blood
and you know the peels of saturdays dumped underground or between crowns of baked chestnuts
for ingesting, and on the concrete between the humps in the dog's bed between larvae through veins etcetera
rummaging while in the shade of the meek
a pair of iron pliers settles the beetle

and thumbs
and seedy ladle
and the impartial finger

soaked in chewy wine and blushing salt that squashes it and gets dirty and then
caused a mess the whole joint saphorments and tell him off²⁷, and the two bulls
calm in the heart of the buzzard of Calends²⁸ Sex, the ashy

finger prints rubbed against the midnight, and twist
turn up side down, flash, Majesty of the Buzzard! if, then, the thick,
universal fever is collected in the nation with an unspoiled spoon, out of
long disgust, then the High Abdomen of the Abdomenenddio²⁹ petrifies!
filled with knots in the throat, merry resentment, sobs, scratches,
litanies without a text, unbreathable, and obliquely
the corpses of high cinereous Dogs pant uncorrupted on the tip of the reeds
floating and the full and
empty ecumene³⁰ of bulbs validates the power and non power of the genuine
Omnipotent, ally to starvation's tender delirium and to the furtive,
elegiac crash of erotic axes, and door jambs worn out by thrashing hips,
by push and pull and never mind that the sky belongs!

and in the rocks of darkness your livid precipices sidereal floods rare reflexes are
strangled in broad strokes and the prophetic
tedeums³¹ and the ingrown nail of ecstasies inside the bark
of the mulberry and the eye uprooted from its rock, motionless
in idle soundings, idiotic revenge until
the fanfare of carob plays skimming the air, cracking the new era,
the bicipital era, of phonetic devilries, the neumatic³² palimpsests
from the pinhole of the egg of a clandestine, solitary, illustrious, delicate, caducous, urbane, generous, long
syllable, carnal like the corpus of separation and equality: and stirring in the round
cradle, like the two ears of a steer, of the auricle of the ear between timpani and hammer
the sleepless lanceolate cymbal of the frontier express trains blossoms, and rustling
the dust cloud of trucks pounces after hours, and the sense, from a distance,
of the twin lights in the ears, perpetual, subdued moment and the flash
of the Four Last Things³³: that is, a valley, basket-like, of dawns sacrificed
by the love of souls, by the unharmed suffrage
of larvae and otherworldly barbarian pilgrim national necessary soviet or jewish surnames

one that begins like this, and ends like that,
of apollo³⁴ to the fire and the thighs of saint Creature, masculine or feminine³⁵,

will throw the Bird

oh, unsuspecting, oh freezing oh decreasing nuptial bed of our breaths
so close, shoulder to shoulder! may homily and enamel and muscle
of paracletic³⁶ sorcery, exhaling, in virga verbi,
strike you down, or may the sancta ecclesia, ecumenical list, shapeless
apocalypse vocalized and sealed with inert lips, among vineyards
strike you down: an idolological³⁷ yet evil stupor, and may a bitter
quarrelling of skies incinerate the satanic peplum, the pasture, and the storm.

¹ *Pattona* is a type of polenta made with chestnut flour instead of cornmeal.

² *Barbos* is Milanese for “chin.”

³ *Itaglie*, pronounced It-al-yay, is Villa’s intentional misspelling of the plural form of Italia. Throughout the piece, Villa often employs the plural “Itaglie” as well as the singular “Itaglia.”

⁴ In the original, Villa replaces the first “i” in the adjective “sibilline” with a “y”; we adapted the English spelling to this irregularity.

⁵ The word for “buzzard” is feminine in Italian (*poiiana*). Villa, instead, gives it a masculine ending (*poiano*).

⁶ *Tra le frasche*, literally “between the branches,” is an idiomatic expression with many meanings: to avoid doing something, to jump from one subject to another in conversation, or to find a private place to make out with your girlfriend/ boyfriend.

⁷ *Saforamenti* is Milanese dialect for *sacramenti* (sacraments).

⁸ Today the principle meaning of *Zoccole* (sewer rat) is “whore” (in Roman dialect). In Italian, mice and rats are often associated with sex. See “Sorca” (form the Latin for “little mouse”), as well as “topa” (mouse), which refers to the female organ.

⁹ As with “sybilline,” Villa replaces the first “i” in “dinastico” with a “y.” The reverse was done in English to mirror the original.

¹⁰ Here Villa parses the Italian noun “giaculatoria” (a short prayer) to highlight its different components: *già* (already), *cul* (ass), and the ending –oria.

¹¹ “Baggian” in Milanese dialect means someone who is stupid, dumb, or slow-witted. *Baggiane* is in the feminine plural. A *fregoni* is someone who “frega” that is “rubs” or “fucks.” The passage may refer to a ritual carried out in the famous Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan: for good luck, people grind their heels into the testicles of the bull depicted on its mosaic floor.

¹² *Nergal* was a deity worshipped throughout Mesopotamia, a figure Villa most likely encountered often as a translator of ancient Semitic languages.

¹³ The adjective *eucharistica* should be spelled without the “h” (eucaristica), but Villa’s carries out a hyper-characterization of the word by following a Greek spelling (see intro page 129). We have, instead, removed it in English to mimic the irregularity.

¹⁴ In the original Villa removes the second “o” in “odorosa,” calling attention to morpheme “rosa” (rose) within it.

¹⁵ A combination of the nouns “speleological” (having to do with the exploration of caves) and “phoné.”

¹⁶ This is a pseudo-transliteration into the Roman alphabet of the Greek word for “idea.” ἰδέα comes from εἶδω (*eido* or I see).

¹⁷ *Sociofugal* is a word coined in English by Humphrey Osmond, a British psychiatrist. It describes a seating arrangement that promotes seclusion by facing the seat outwards. However, the Italian *sociofugo* is, in all likelihood, Villa's original creation and probably meant somebody who flees from social situations.

¹⁸ In the original, the adjective "inanellato" (enrined) appears as *inan ellato* to emphasize the "inane" contained therein.

¹⁹ *Lattime* is the *crusta lactea*, milk crust, or honeycomb disease: a yellowish skin rash affecting the scalp of newborns.

²⁰ It is not clear what Villa had in mind with these initials, although it may be a reference to tuberculosis.

²¹ *Manduria* is a town located in the Puglia region of southwestern Italy known for its strong red wines.

²² *Permansivo* is a combination of the verb "permanere" (to linger on, remain, or continue) or the adjective "permanente" (permanant) and the adjective "espansivo" (expansive).

²³ The *fabbriceria* is an office in the Roman Catholic Church that oversees the construction and maintenance of ecclesiastical property.

²⁴ The little rhyme in the original *mulin mulèta / ghe se slunga la tèta* literally means *mill sharpener / the tit grows longer* in Villa's native Milanese dialect.

²⁵ Here Villa is playing with the Latin nomenclature of botany: the noun *glykyrhiza* refers to the plant whose roots are used to make licorice while the adjective *linnaei* refers to the scientist Carl Linnaeus, who invented that very nomenclature. *Regolizia*, instead, is a vernacular spelling of the Italian word for "licorice."

²⁶ Rather than "agonia" (agony), the Italian reads *ingonia* (ingony).

²⁷ The original *porcudighel* is a euphemism for the blaspheme "porco dio" (pig god).

²⁸ *Calends* is the first day of the month in the ancient Roman calendar, but when speaking of Greek Calends one postulates an impossible date, since the Greek calendar did not have Calends.

²⁹ Here Villa is playing on the liturgical expression "domine deo," which is typically rendered in spoken Italian as "domineddio." Villa brings in the "abdomen" to create "abdomenenddio."

³⁰ *Ecumene* was used by the Greeks and Romans to denote the boundaries of what was then known to be the inhabited world. Today, it refers to the projection of a united world under the Christian Church.

³¹ *Tedeum* is the Latin hymn "Te Deum" (Thee, oh God, we praise).

³² The adjectival form of *neume*: the basic element of Western musical notation prior to the invention of five-line staff notation.

³³ *I Novissimi*, or *The Four Last Things*, refer to the final events of the apocalypse: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

³⁴ Apollo's bird was the crow. When one of his lovers, Coronis, had an affair with Ischys, a crow informed the God of her betrayal. At first he did not believe the bird and turned its feathers from white to black as punishment for spreading lies. Upon discovering the truth, however, Apollo made the crow sacred, entrusting it with the task of announcing important deaths.

³⁵ Here Villa creates two grammatical hermaphrodites by providing the Italian adjective for "masculine" in its feminine singular form (*maschia*) and the adjective for "feminine" in its masculine singular form (*femmino*).

³⁶ The adjectival form of *Paraclete*: the Holy Spirit in the form of an advocate or counselor.

³⁷ Here Villa substitutes "idol" for the prefix "ideol-" in ideological.

From *Heurarium*

apoklypse

Ma Mis Ma minutieuse Apoklypse
Des Souffles à l' Égard de l' Être-Être dans Souffle
et comme un Clou clé dans de dès des Poumons élevés
Rougissant aux Festins-Holocaustes-Tammiziens Débarqués en Vain
Sur Orient en Vain Toquades-Poids-Fontaines Collectives pour
Charmefoyer sous les Pléroxies Etrangères d' Une
Nature très très brève décalée retrouvée dans les Bras des Échos Secs
des Urines des Titans quam parum probabilis

ideo

idea

un Coeur mystologique or fire of bread or whip of bread or blind falcon of
bread closed in chaos

Par le Sceau de Ton oeil souder les verticales du Désordre dérobé à la
Péperennité

conspiratrice

Un métal vite monte On devient dangers!

le Tumulte

On devient sursthèmes

verticales

On devient Délire

en Relief!

Ton Lieu Tout Lieu est 'Première Fois

Première Voûte

car je suis Soir

de vaches Occultes'

et j'aime les Alspphaltbettes fructifiantes dans

les Jardins des Souffles

Les Hauts Téléphones Saturnieux!

Ma miminutieuse Apoklypse

hyménée liturg

elle voulait
rassaisissir

des rayons-moelle
les obélisques de sang

l' Es
prit dans
tête tue
tordue

pousse malgré tout

ouvre inachevée
guenille frêle
enfante sa mère

et
mangée

salée

ombroffrande sexyle
d' après nature
à l' issue
du ravin
méandre
auréole sexe île

et
vo
mit
vo
mit
vo
le le

pouillème l' Ombylic des Syrtes
Saturniennes
l'épéchair !

épargnez
les
peuples,
simples,

guerres virides, guerres de lieu, gue
rres périmées, décès lascifs, gueguerrelles

et la trouble tribu débouche ses parents!
dont elle afflige les coeurcorps péritonés
glissés d' après nature dans le piège des squelettes syntaxe

par des
cuillers
vider
l' Oeil
fleuri du
Kyk
lope de Kr
ète comme
un pot

sé
mul
acres
fleuris
sur
les
socles
fur
yeux

phys
iolo
gi
iiques,
pin
acl
es
phal
lus

dieupouillés
pouill
és,
ar
rosé
s
de
coul
heures !

ultimatum
à la corrrrée

last AA
AA. AAA. A.AA
AAAAAA A A A
AAAAAA A.AA.
A. AAA.AA.A.A.
AAAAAA A A A
AAAAA A t u m
tu tu tu tu tum
1 x 1 x 2 1x1 x1x
1 x aux aux aux
nubifrages nus
aux aux aux aux
oxyfrages bus
aux aux aux aux
gens de bien de
gens de
genre de couleur
1 x 1 x 1 2 1 x 1 x
1 x 2 1 1 1 x 1 2 x
1 x 1 1 x JUANE
et, mais bref
andé davialcu tuti

allusion et

allusion et olation
parenthèses considérées
inter

dévorées migratrices

par de
dans
sur
hystère
afin qu' il y ait
une route au bout
des cendres de
l' agneau des années

surplace
surparole
la présence
suppliciée
éty

mologie disparue
 dans
 le
 ventre lappelappe
 de la parabole du
 festin
 carambole
 du
 toutperdre
 du
 saccage
 dans
 le ventre
 lappelappe
 cachot réclus en ré
 clusion sous l'orgue
 loeil en petites caté
 ractés
 ponctuées
 happings!
 et les yeux
 des yeux
 des portes
 essuiera les larmes
 du
 toujours
 de la répétition généralisatrice
 par
 lésions
 de
 prépucecrâne
 chapellecouple
 brûlante
 exultez, fémursvierges
 hémistiches [dieresis]
 dans
 hémistiches
 chargent
 dia-
 critiques
 de la prisongénie miraculeuse ou
 abominable

des 100 eyesyard

ECCE
 PUER
 DATUS
 EST
 [NOBIS]

par balancement
 du bout
 de la tige
 la cruauté sans couleur
 sans spectre

sans pudeur
il demandait : où
est la demeure du
droit ?

point d'allégorie!

BIS
DIMIDIASTI
SAL IN
OVO

par le grandegoutte
dpollution
prêtkosmogonienne
long
sur disparition
fumée
blanche
race

cette probation pour verger
du

châtiment au

-- qu' une larval sujétion
[voilà la leda multipliée par une
glosse-plume-rejeton]
les autruches

de plaisance
du
thrônculaire

par l'hystère
lésion
battue
hypersucrisation des vingtamines
dans la parousie qui
brûle
à son rôle palpable tremble à se
partager en écailles
la defectuosité de la

PONCTUATION

the cuban gong

captious phonetic
el precio del azucar

suffered downy speech

seductive conch of language and
 glandulous facundity
 el precio del azucar
 HEADY uncaught of he Mothes
 hatch meek of the Mothes
 uncaught spirit pantingly
 and Nip nettle to rumnage sweetly
 implicitly into rump

suffered suff to
 paralytic eyelid
 a gamut
 HEADY
 and el precio del alcazar
 explicitly into purling
 hurling
 burling

when bride bear buckle into blackbloodvessel
 growing scar (stigmata) pitta
 into growing wavelesses oblivion

when wine brite rear fackler whare when what wine backing
 harshly + abstersion + headdress + headstrong
 oh, nimble purpot burnimble bearbobscure
 scissible Storm Unipare Urinary

obscure revolency exuvial VIRUS
 How Are the Raised Up

as
 in the Shrine
 lies kneeling
 palsied
 Baal
 Bol
 Beef

throw down
 and
 snatch
 alltogether

with
 Nip
 with
 Hold

with
 Frock
 Rain
 from
 Chasm

dark time
 Nailscratch Claw
 Joinable Unguis
 For
 as
 el priceio
 into
 Urine of the
 Baal

Bol
Beef
Down

mata-borrão para flavio motta

eu diria l' m encantado, e então
uma nuviosa designação de continentes involuntarios por jogos
nasais, fundos jogos, acende
ao lonje entre os anos desperdidos itinerantes
como faiscas de amarguras
abdominais, como bichos de cristal na nuca muda, acende
o nome mais amado mais miolo mais milagre
e o quem diz: ' agora '! e o quem

cai no corte mitico do mondo, nas luminosas
trovejadas gerações dos nomes: lèxico
jejum e fresco come o prado de espinafre de trevo
no recòncavo, pàlidas requisições de ecos
e espirros e rèplicas, anforas anoitecidas
no pulmão gigante, palpitanes gengivas, cenoiras
africanas, paleoafricanas, protoafricanas, coxas
rasgadas o abertas, polpas de aboboras
ideais: agora, agora. Nam rectitudo
per se est phallica, truncada também, devagazinha:

onde una zigoma torna-se sigla o sigla e sigilo, torna-se
constellação deitada nas escuras polpas sem nomes
e incha-se então de raiva a fonte das medidas
e das mudanças, là, eu digo, provocar
o poder subhumano da pasmação, do broto
não mortal, o voo ocioso, o ganir
chupado, de viboras nas câimbras
das vagas, dos grans, e veremos lampejar
a alta caça, a esgrima
em voz baixa na caveira, as balanças de ossos
eschatologicos, agora mesmo,

si o sangue da sombra não è sangue ni sombra,
si o cavalo do cavalo agora è sombra desmaiada
o sombra brotada na suma sombra ostra, o som
da tromba saca o celeste descontecer, afrouxa
o orvalho, e o remo corta em dois as cinzas
dos vivos e as cinzas dos sons, como
na pàscoa dos continentes cortò o Brazil e a Angola,
cortó as arvores da ciencia e as arvores da loucura
peregrinante, cortò o tubarão em dois espelhos
a tromba grande: não agora.

[*Bahia*]

Options

(17)
**ESCHATOLOGICAL MADRIGALS
CAPTURED BY A SWEETROMATIC
CYBERNETOGAMIC VAMPIRE,
BY VILLADROME**

-A-

and **H** VETAO SHR ET SH
here is brunt (i'am strained by (hy)
H a not satisfactory
ground of a mind) (hround mhind ohv)
(horrified Sling! let's go
for Universal Ultimatum-God
Ultimatum from God - from G (ohw)
by
CYCLOFLESH
the hypenecrotic Essence of Muscles of Word Dumps
(from free Dedalic or Pythial Style) hyle
and here of here of the here the Sewer of Member
and Raid's Fluency ber smile

-E-

good, it is need unds
to murder here the Proposition
and tree the tree of Brunds
Proposition that say
with negative Impulses or Brunts sbrunts
with means or
Reversible Enigmes or enigmatic Retributions
or Throughs with negative Powers
wers scrambling tanatózoos and spermatozóos

-N-

6+ 6 times daily something out =ty
THE DE MO CRAT DY SENT ER Y /Y
from the Proposal Numeral Echoes and ty
Chamaleon Echoes E Choes
and Reluctant Echoes ()E
of Levels lie down, from Meandering Levels, (ty
down your mind down your all

we're nearing Trialtrim
we're down the chains on a more mollow Level
on increasing measure of Universal Hostilidentity

Y

-C-

Obviously School of Divinity Among Nations ons
represented the Hypoperiodic on Almost-periodic

BEAMS

to suck the vanishing wind wrong the Hygh Lesions,
wani ishingshaming shame juggle shame, g.by
shwame in computer here:

quantum-mantic in the Death of Humanity
corpse's inner Kalyx, ah!
corpse-torpedo α corpse-gate! $x(t) y$
corpse-revelation αx corpse-pilot! $\alpha x x$

in dirty Brain Transfer (l'Oubblie) (y) (e)
in Brained Petals in Brained Petals
in a Defectional Spectrum Spectrum(e)

in a Rif Rig Kalyps
(for the
Caribbean
Beachcombers!
good by, Franco!)

in eams architect
(good by, Fr.!!!)
(good by, Frr)

-O-

and here, yes, myself, when inflame, Pythoning

-ostand
(chance) in a some % (chance)
in a some musical War
of psychoplegogametes (chance)
(chance)
at a some Disfinite Number (chance)
at a some Apomorphic Lymph (chance)
of the someversal Somebody Something
(chance!!)
expire (shamming!) (chance)
and geographical Prayer and
vernacular bashful Disfonction
(chance) and Confluent Brains! (chance)

-EX-

Who would embody herself? Ø
in a Cart-Rut who stretch (trying) against to ZERO Ø
in a Glade-Sphere where the incolumity of the feelings explode
in Ø much Infinities who engage all Ø breathing times
oh, Ø! who would embody herself? Ø
The authority lie into the hands of not-bodies,
who then, who well would (au hasard) embody herself?
almost by a buttock? or an uvula? undivided
and unextensive mycrocytes? Ø
Has no-one preroborated the new flesh? Ø Ø
(légerment reconnu, null-time, le temps se voisine du précors!)
and triumph of Pepsin of the Peptic Glands of
peremptory perempt!
evirascerated BrBraid-
pent

-S-

echo of untimely VIEW Viewkit
(near Mountain View you
near San Mateo samatio
near Santa Rosa downtown
sanarosa, down, big sur)
surely town!
when then we want the wowf wraith who wrap
Wit of woldheart of wAfrica, ah! Kitkit
Geological Kit as

-V-

nuncupatively god
nuncupat(ed) nuncp(ed)
(write, then, until nakedness off) (bellevue court,
next covington road, next the rancho, los altos,
california, u.s.a. write) eh, boy boy, eh boy!
die, god, nothingmighty god, go go
od odd, sto od up, go off goof god!
(but my spite is wisedart (galliformia)
scoffing into the dip bare goof wen,
my
into the offall ll) (rmià)
my

-X-

naked excrements

town

Readst Soak

Red

Red

A finitive IVE
YELLOW
and yellow's N
numbrical nest

The How! tow(n)

the How Snake How, the How How How, Snack

-by EMB[O] LEM-

(brain) put out

by Emb(o)lem

in Eschatological elementary (buds of Sempiternity) (Semisemp-)

Super-Brain as Stag-Beetle of

my nephew (few) (gustatory buds)

look down on bright glowed beds (bud)

down tetranfinit Box (brain)

Stealty Box of Humoral Life.

(brain) hz jump over

hjump over

hph beyond.

and plot brain

)André, my

phw neph ew view

and A Transaptomathic Blu Brain is

to conquer (i thinthink)

(Goad god to keep it in the slac(k)

summer god,

right?

by Unshockable He Men Only

]

eh!

e brain

highlydevelop

ed

-L-

the omb the onk the onkeous windows

(downs)

of the sensing walked fly up the whipping black heart
 black purple (burply)
 vein of bloody anxiety
 (v) (good) (just about it)
 call out turds (try it)
 it is a victory
 it is an assault
 (t) (good) (hault)

-F-

(eliminated)
 ic next ic
 calculate calcul
 mechanoptical hit
 bare hits lips (slip mastic)
 bare sloping sloping ing ic
 goof swell well (h)ic
 awful nekropenis nis
 in an onkolatric(t) (ed)
 put-pure-cerimony ic
 ah! ahah!
 any thingg
 just about
 ah! yes
 immer blown oblivions!
 tic to Contents ah ic
 bic Bic
 compact

-H-

for a and, all the same, cytoplasmes as broid id
 as a marvelous Gulf (for a) idem
 as a marvelous Gland
 glandOptical Gland
 greatglandular, ya (for a)
 greatankylar, ya (for a)
 greatincular, ya (for a)
 call BUPQ
 for a
 the Bank of Univercule Powder and Qualm
 for a
 for a selective Mind-Nail (garanted)
 for a

for a calculate, push (for a)
Bum

Bump!

p

Bump!

cool

col

Flash!

(call contaminat cont cant Kit!
min menacé ménhâché)

-OX-

ppossessing out decapsulating out o
tth e the fulgurated corpuscle
where all Intervals and
Constellating Scissions of Null-tiem (al
drive on o
o (oho) oh, resuscitated pacific Gulfs,
queasy Hills and
shading adolescences of th
e

blo ooo
od-less therapic illogical
bals balsamic wondering
comp computered Murder
scomp
pull off fast facial KIT!
(and your Peptic Hemiparalysis)
pall (into t tyme time timr)
(constituted t)

-OC-

et puissent-ils crever tous ceux qui n'en possèdent pas
dollar? dollars?

how dollars? how dea death dollars?
yellow dollars?
the H₂ OW W H₂ O LIE DO₂ LL ARS

in totum? Dollar in totum? totum in tot?
is the exclusive pleasure
of the of and
the totum is the (um?)
level of the abusive
the totum
(directions ecc.)
lie without number numb d

and without word w wor w
and without cause caus er
*conosci il dollaro?*¹ totum in the totum
vival il dollaro Viwa!
thirsty tree!
yellowst + + +
green x grey

P r o k t o n o o s

en redelirant du Synchronos noos
rede RDL envirusant sexe
En disjctant la dépénalisation
dé ca pi ter les mots qu'on ne connais pas
pour recouvrer tout ce qui nous a abandonné
et
décapiter l'air décapitéter
décapiter la voix (obsexe)
je te dis (à propos du ' champ d'inaction ')
déjecté
Sxⁿ Nexe S'enfuyant
= EN (espèce nouvelle) X
Sx⁻ⁿ Scène
zz z z z z :
et donc (à propos des ' champs de dépénalisation ')
décapiter la nombre the number le now
ton nom ton non ton nombre
(farfouillant s'enfarfouftant que)

-EX-

o^h au^h aux^h et

et eause demeures venues et
donc il vous disent chose de chose de la chose, disent,
ils, donc, chosent, choisissent, chause
un chouse, un clou dans le pied, disent,
ils d'un niverse Impiété,

oser-ce CHOSE
= = f, fut, fût-ce que x
Hausser CHOSE X CHOSE X CHOSE HAOS^E
AU

ou ça [c] c'est cy ni que : que vive mon Parménide !

et puis, oh! et puis sans se faire, puis sans se faire blesser,

et puis sans cesse, et puis sans se faire anticoncevoir,
et puis sans se faire émaner, et puis sans se faire inconnu,
nu, nu, nununamarines, nuanches mêlées, et pus,
et pupuis tu ne tient pas de, ehn! bon, alors, et puis,
tout éclairé, je suis venu que, il n'y a avoir que de

-F-

with old futur love
entbiologisierung!!

¹ *Conosci il dollaro?* means “Do you know the dollar?”.

SUB BREGME

BREGME OUVERT SUR BREGME OU VERT
d'ou les fleurs ces bêtes (se bêtent) fleurissent
entant en sortant en recul (par le cul) nul
(c'est mi eux sort ir par la la
feu n'être du cu Il que) di
disent, ils disent : tu as donc *nc?*
payé? qu'est-ce que tu as donc
payé? tu as payé la sémence,
le protospérme? as-tu payé l'y l'i dylle ?
as-tu payé la déluxion defluxion luxation
de nêtre? que tu, vicaire de? de toute séquence?
blanche chaux crânienne blanche blême chavire
BREGME BREGME MEGME MEGME MEG
ne me quittez pas donc en écoute, fenêtre,
feunêtres naïtre, indulgences délices, tout?
ne me, ne vous quittez pas là haut si doux,
les chauves-souris sémaphores véniels et se
reins, ses riens foutus murmurent de loin
d'en haut de la fut nestre, et vont rendre,
chauves-souris délicat exlmatifs, vifs morts,
ou morts (les morts) en anthropophrénie, pas oùt(r)opie
et murmurent de loin, ses riens, d'en haut,
d'en où, l'où exclamatif, à gésir, à gémir, pregg,
bressé braisé les poils, et, cette fois, en entropofagiggue.
C'est donc du même que la Paix elle-même
dans le bregme secret a été elle-même
coupée damnée, all-hâchée de 300-fois, ou
de bien plus que 500-fois de fois par, par
(les bazookazz-hymnes de loin de funestres)
les statistiques alors qui flue qui feurissent
qui fleurissent nous fleurissent arrosées
truffées, coeurchasses, coeurchadavres, coeurculs,
des Membres Hauts, mais désormais tous
découronnés des Siens très sombres, les
les Membres ne possèdent megme plus rien, ni
des Prépuces Absolus, ni des eaux Arbres Inconnus
(des Adscisses et des Rescisses, Coordonnés,
Desordonnés, Couronnés cetera) les semences
des dieux vierges sount ailleurs tout près
de la Presse des Horizons, du Tombeau
des Yeux, l'eau des jeux, la Tombe
de tous ceux qui trombent et affirment
pleinement: l'entreTenu s'écarte et cache,
pour le decouvrir, le Rusé Parfois, dans la

dans le va et vient de la nuque-nuque.
 Cette Historoie, donc? connais? connais quand?
 qlé jour 14 de Merde, ede Merde de Pardre,
 demeure demrd^h, kjai fêtte fait forfait
 kjai fait swing shuiñ^h kswingint gh
 swinginterview 2 into eyesschillings²
 into the tain tt ted eyes rotten eyes
 eyes of the Goddes Bitch Beech.
 Tout ça tout sent, sent une peausition massacrée
 (revue aux ultradimensions sanitaires, ulctr-)
 le frères de (la) (lui) lumière (de là) les frères
 s'avoncent sans élon(g) ni flair, ni air ni d'air
 (nier ni est ni n'y est pas, niné) (ekl-qui
 halète qui mord/p/e) qui m qu'eklaire
 qui avince le lui même (h) sans se dire
 sans se rire sur ce qui avait été dit, et
 et quelquefois se massacrer (masse à cré er!)
 en me moi, en memoire de père à dit ex
 ig é, et alors, voilà l'histoire, un enterré
 subregme suplime oùvrefroi (f roi) (of
 (t rouble) sous le filmprénom (bregmnon)
 oh, masse sacrée! crève, tonc, toi-même, Member,
 le Glante Etrang(u)lé, Expulsé, Pr(o)p(u)lsé, Ember,
 (assez) l'Etranculé le long et c'est se soit
 mais en on luit on lui en VI SI ON
 (le lui mis dans la luimère, pourtant,
 mi-ère) (oh, ma sacrée, ma nue, oh, peu tard
 ma SI ON massacrée, lève-toi, le ma
 tin, le matétin, lève!) plus entre le Glante
 Explusé, le temps bourdonne, tik tok, décapite-le,
 Corps-de-Charge, Corps-de-Décharge, U
 Unigénite et Foutroyé by Parousie de Cendre, by by!
 by Equipalpullence, Pus, Puchoix, U
 Unigénite, à l'Occ Urrence Outre Age, U
 nigénite vivé vécu de ton Nombriil Horizontal
 (Ember, Member, Remember, Emb, Embor)
 et petard

ΤΑ ΘΗΒΗΙΣΙ ΤΕΙΧΗ

le mûra di t;éb;é

The Walls of Th; éb; és

ΟΥΙΛΛΑ
ΑΙΜΙΛΙΟΣ
ΤΟΥΣ ΛΟΓΟΥΣ
ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ

1

σκιόεν τὸ ἔνδειγμα ναυαγεῖ
ἐν τῇ παλιντύχῃ κλήσει

ἀγαθόν

τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὄνομα ἐπεὶ τὸ νέφος
ἀμαυρῶς ἤμβλυσε τῆν τῆς ἄτης
φύσιν καὶ ἄημα, τὸ τῆς ἀορασίας
ἄορ ἰχθυοειδές
εἶπερ γὰρ ἄμφω ἐοράσαμεν τὸ αἶμα
ἀρχαίων τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκ τοῦ
τοῦ ἀπθτησίμου αἰῶνος κλίματος

βλύειν, ἤδη τὰς παλιρροίας
ἐοράσαμεν αἶματι μυδαλίας
ὡς ἀπόφορον αἶμα, καὶ ἤδη
ὁμοιοσημοσύνην ἐοράσαμεν
ἐς τὸ ἀτάλεστον κατασπέρχοντα,

ἀλλὰ μὲν τις ὀλίγος ἄνεμος λάθρα
ἠλαίνων ὡς ἄτροπος οὖρος
τὸ τέλος προύτεινε, διαλλαγαὶ δε
νῦν προβάδην βρύουσιν.

2

παιφάσσουσα ἀσήμων τε
ὡς ἐπαρὰ αἰθυίας
ἥς ὄττιος μελέδημα
τὸ οὐθαρ ἔπληξε,
ἐπαιωρουμένη, ἢ ὁμφή
τοῦ ὁμφαλοῦ
τὸ τοῦ μένουσ
αἰθερίου μερίδιον

ἔδόνησε;

ἄλλ' ἄνάτη
οὐδέποτε αὐτή
παύσεται φθιμένη.

3

καθηδύσμενος, σὺν αἵματι
ἐπιήκοος τε, εἰς τὸν ἰχῶρα
τῶν ὀρειάων τῶν ἑλλήνων
πᾶν ἡμαρ, ἡματα πάντα, πράως
ἔκοισάμην, καὶ οὐ τρέψω
μέχρις μαρτυρίαν ἐρημίᾳ δοῦναι,
μέχρις τε φύμεναι καὶ πνεῖν
μένεα
τοῦ φωνῆ καὶ τύχη τυγχανέμεν
τὸν πόρον ψυχρὸν τῶν θελύμων,
οὐ ἢ τῆς, λήθης κοίτη, θεόφιν
κεκαδμένη, ῥέμβει
καὶ τέτατο τῶν λιγυρῶν
αἰώνων μίτος
καὶ ἤδη ἀορίστη
τῆς Ἀράχνης ἔλιξ ἀθλεύει
καὶ
αὐτῆμαρ ἀμφιλαφές τοῦ ῥύπου πέτασμα
ἀνήνυτος ῥίπης, ῥῖπος τῆς
μετακινήσεως ἀνήκει.

4

αἰᾶ ἑβλάκα βλέμματα,
αἰ ἄραναρὸν βλέφαρον,
αἰ πελωρίδα

τοῦ φωτός
αἰ αὐγαί, πανταχῆ ἀναπεφυρμέναι,
γλυκύ ἐπίσφαλμα
παρὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἄξονα,
ὄφρα ἢ σκέδασις ἔσται,
ἐπὶ πολυοδίας ἀποθανοῦνται

5

ἐγὼ μὲν τοίνυν τυφλῶς
σοὶ ἔδωξα

τοσόνδε καὶ τοσὸν μοῦ
ὅσον τοῖς ἄλλοις
ὀφείλεται, ὡσθ' οἱ ἄλλοι δε
γίγνοιτ' ἄν ἄλλοι
ὡς ἑαυτὸ τὸ ἄλλο

6

ἀγνή τε λαγνή πυθία, ἀθιγῆς δεΐξις,
ἢ τὰς πολύστρεπτας ῥοῦνας σπαθῶς,
καὶ τον νεφελωτὸν ἀναρτῶς ἄβυσσον
καὶ ῥοιῶν δίμμιον δέμας τῆς προτροπῆς
- τῶ πυρὶ ὁμοῦ φολίδες φλέγουσι -
εἴσω ὦν μεταρσίων κρημνῶν,
ἤδη εἶτα αἰ ἐχίδναι ἀδελφαί βρομῦσι,
ἰδυῖα ἐπήλυσις, ἕτεροκλινῆς καταβολή,
ἐκ τοῦ παιδικοῦ λαβυρίνθου ὤτικοῦ
καὶ οἱ ὄφιες τῶν μυριελίκτων
θητῶν ψυχῶν

καὶ αἰ ἐχίδναι τῶν χλοηφορώντων μητρῶν
τὰ τῶν φωλεῶν τεύξονται
εὔγε στόμα ἐδάκεσαν καὶ τὴν οὐράν
- φάσις ἀντίφασις-
καὶ αἰ πυκινὰ πλήθουσι ῥῖσαι αἰ ἀρχαί
τοῦ βίου τε τοῦ τε κυδοίμου.

7

καὶ οὐτῶ μὴν νῦν ὁ πτηνὸς κύων
οὐτε ὑφ' ὅτου εὖ πάσσει γινώσκων
οὐδὲ σημαίνειν δυνάμενος ὅτου πᾶσαι
ψυχαὶ καὶ ὄρθριαι οὐαὶ καὶ κόραι
δεῖνται, ἄνω ἀπὸ ἐκδημίας,
οἶος εἶναι ἐν ἀστράσιν κύων οἰσάμενος
ὄρθριος ἐξέβλυσε πλαγίως.

ἀλλὰ τῆθεν ὅτι ὁ κοικυλίων
κύων ὤτρυνε προὔτεινέ τε
ἢ τῆς οὔτινος οὖν καρδίας
αἷψα ἀποδρῦει ὠρυγή.

καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ, ἐπὴν ἡ ὄλη
σκοτία ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀλίνθου ἔλθῃσι,
χρόνος ὁ καθήκων ἐλεύσεται.

8

ἢ ἀργεστής στεροπή
δυοῖν ἀστέρων
ἄνωθεν ἀλλήλους
ἐκβλεπόντων, ἔσπασε
τυφλὴ τοῦ ὀρισμοῦ
ἐπιείκειαν, παρ' ὅσον
πάθημα καὶ ὄρμη.

καὶ ἔσω τὴν παλινδινήτην
προχοὴν ἐληλύθαμεν.

9

εἰ μὴν πάντα
τήδεπερ ἦρυσε
καὶ τὰντα
ἄλλοσε τελεῖ

ἄλλοσε ποι τοῦ αἰῶνος

10

πάντων μεσεμβριαζόντων τῶν θηβαίων
ἐν εὐείλω χώρῳ, ἦσθιον παγώδες ἐγώ,
καὶ τότε ἔκ τοῦ μετακοσμίου μέλαινα
μέλαινα πηκτὶς τοῦ αἰλίνου οὐρου
πηκτὶς τοῦ αἰθαλίονος ἀνέμου
ἐλθὼν τὸ λήϊον ἦνθισε καὶ διέπτη
πρὸς τὸν ἀέρα:

ὁ μέλος Θήβη πάλαι
ὅτε μὲν ἴφθιμα τὰ τεῖχη ἐξελήλακε,
ἄλλοτε δὲ ὄψε τὰ τεῖχη τρύχεσκεν
ὡς τὰ τοῦ κόσμου πέρατα.

νῦν δὴ θῆλυ δέρμα ὁ μέλος
καὶ σπολάδα ἐπικαλλύνει, μέσφα τὸ
μουῖσιν ἐς ἱερὸν τῆς διαφθορᾶς
νόσον περιδρομὴν ἀνεκβαλεῖ.

1

crepuscolo dell'ombra, il Segnale-Testimonio
annega nel Richiamo, nuovamente pieno

di inquietudine oscura: oh, buono
è il nome del Cielo, favorevole, quando
l'Oscurità, ciecamente squarciandosi,
abortisce e genera la realtà
della Tentazione Orrenda, e il Fiuto:
che è quella spada a forma di pesce
della Invisibilità.

Così noi due allora insieme abbiam visto
il sangue delle Azioni Antiche spuntare
dal piano inclinato del tempo, cui
si può attingere sangue: e abbiam visto
Flusso e Riflusso umidi di sangue:
e abbiamo visto la Fatale Conformità
rispingere sempre in avanti
ciò che non avverrà mai.

Ma un piccolo incorruttibile colpo di vento,
furtivo, vagando come brezza senza ritorno,
ha offerto il Fine; e le Riconciliazioni
ora, poco a poco, tornano a sbocciare.

2

scintillata così d'improvviso,
e indistinta, come l'imprecazione
della gabbiana ferita al seno
da una tremenda incertezza della vista,

ecco la Voce dell'Ombelico,
il presago suono
dell'Ombelico, ha scosso,
eccitato, la parte più intima
dell'universo Principio
dell'Atmosfera:

ma essa, innocente, non cessa mai
di consumarsi e sparire.

3

reso felice, nel sangue,
con finissima sensazione,

dentro la magica linfa
dei defunti spiriti elleni,
io ogni giorno, tutti i giorni,
dolcemente mi sono disteso
e assopito,

 fino a offrire
regolare testimonianza
al deserto, fino a suscitare
e a reprimere il coraggio
di trovare ancora, con la voce
e per destino, il passaggio gelido
dei Fondamenti delle Cose, là dove
il Giaciglio dell'Oblio, raggiunte
le divine simulazioni, serpeggia,
e la Ragnatela dei sussurranti
millenni, indefinita si stende,
ellisse del Ragno che gioca,
e nello stesso momento l'infinito
Perimetro, il grande Dispiegamento
della Sporcizia, incompiuto
Ventaglio, gabbia di Mutamenti,
comincia a innalzarsi.

4

Ahi indolente sguardo,
ahi fragile pupilla,
ahi ostrica enorme!

Per tutto confuse, le radiazioni,
dolce scivolata, dolce caduta
lungo l'Asse del cielo,
fino a che ci sarà dispersione,
lungo tramiti intrecciati
continueranno a sparire.

5

e io veramente come un cieco ti ho dato
quella tale e tanta parte di me
quanta agli altri è necessaria
perché altri diventino gli altri
quanto lo stesso Altro.

6

pura e lasciva Pizia, intatta rivelazione,
che vai producendo aggrovigliate Rune,
e che sospendi in alto il nebuloso abisso,
e sibilando fischi l'assetata forma umana
dell'Impulso (bruciano nel fuoco
intanto, insieme, le Scaglie), dentro
precipiti pareti sospese alle celesti
Regioni, già ecco le bisce sorelle
tuonano, intelligente presagio, fonda-
zione piegata da altre potenze,
tuonano dal puerile labirinto
delle orecchie e i serpenti
delle anime mortali in se stesse
ravvoltole e annodate, e le bisce
delle matrici vulve coperte
di vegetazione, andranno a incontrare
le cose delle caverne e delle tane:
si morsero allora la bocca e la coda
[fase/ /antifasi]
e si moltiplicano le arcaiche fitte
radici della vita
e del tumultuoso combattimento

7

ecco che così il Cane alato, ora,
pur non conoscendo per quali tramiti
egli stesso può portare la fortuna,
né potendo far capire di che cosa
han bisogno le anime, tutte,
e le sostanze primigenie
e le ragazze mattutine, ecco
che aurorale spuntò fuori,
obliquamente, dal basso, dall'esilio,
conscio di essere egli medesimo,
tra gli altri, proprio il Cane:
ma da questo momento, tutto
quello che il Cane, sgranando
i grossi occhi ebeti, ha suscitato
e teso, ecco che l'urlo del cuore
di qualcuno lo devasterà:
e senza il Cane, il tempo esatto
verrà, quando l'ombra totale
sarà discesa sopra il fico

che non matura mai.

8

lo scoppio di raggi
di due astri che dal fondo
si spiano a vicenda,
fa scattare la
Cieca Verosimiglianza
della Definizione
e dell'Incombenza
in quanto Evento e Intimo
Trasalimento:

e allora penetrammo
nella foce sempre ritornante.

9

tutto è cominciato qui
ma tutto finisce altrove:
altrove, in qualche porzione
del millennio

10

tutti fanno la siesta i tebani
nel pomeriggio assolato, nella piazza,
io mangio il gelato:

e fu allora
che tra cielo e terra una nera
arpa, l'arpa nera, lamentosa
lontananza del vento infuocato
ornò di fiori il campo di grano
e sparse nell'aria:

la melodia
a Tebe nell'antichità a volte
fece crescere le mura,
della città: prodigiose!

altre volte
quelle stesse mura, come i confini
del mondo, la melodia distrusse.

Oggi invece la melodia
rende splendente l'epidermide
delle donne, e la pelle
degli animali, fino a quando
la musica sospingerà il transito
verso il Sacro Malanno.

1

shadow's twilight, the Signal-Testimony
drowns in the call, filled once again
with dark unrest: oh, good
is the name of Heaven, favorable
when the Darkness, blindly ripping,
aborts and generates the reality
of the Horrific Temptation, and the Smell:
which is that sword in the shape of a fish
of Invisibility.

Thus the two of us together saw
the blood of Ancient Actions spring
from the inclined plane of time, from which
blood can be drawn: and we saw
Flux and Reflux drenched in blood:
and we saw the Fatal Conformity
relentlessly pushing forward
that which will never be.

But a small incorruptible gust of wind,
stealthily, wandering as a breeze without return,
offered the Purpose; and now, little by little,
Reconciliations bloom again.

2

sparked so suddenly,
and indistinct, like the curse
of the female gull, breast wounded
by a dreadful uncertainty of vision,

there's the Voice of the Navel,
the ominous sound
of the Navel, shook,
excited, the most intimate part
of the universal Principle
of the Atmosphere:

but she, innocent, never ceases
to waste away and disappear.

3

made happy, in the blood,
with the subtlest sensation,
within the magic lymph
of the defunct hellenic spirits,
I every day, day after day,
lay down and slowly
fall asleep,

‘til I offer
regular testimony
to the desert, ‘til I summon
and repress the courage
to find again, through the voice
and by fate, the cold passing
of the Foundation of Things, where
the Slumber of Oblivion, divine
simulations reached, slithers,
and the Web of the whispering
Millennia, expands indefinitely,
ellipse of the Spider that plays,
and at that very moment the infinite
Perimeter, the great Display
of Filth, incomplete
Fan, cage of Changes,
begins to rise.

4

Oh indolent gaze,
oh fragile pupil,
oh enormous oyster!

Entirely confused, the radiations,
sweet slide, sweet fall
along the sky’s Axis,
as long as there’s dispersion,
along woven paths
will continue to vanish.

5

and truly like a blind man I gave you
that certain and large part of me
as much as others need
so that others become the others
as much as the same Other.

6

pure and lascivious Pythia, revelation unspoiled,
you continue to produce tangled Runes,
and suspend on high the nebulous abyss,
and hissing you whistle the thirsty human form
of the Impulse (while the Scales,
together, burn in the fire), within
precipitous cliffs hanging from celestial
Regions, right of course the sister snakes
thunder, intelligent omen, found-
ation buckled by other forces,
thunder from the childish labyrinth
of the ears and the serpents
of mortal souls enveloped and
knotted in themselves, and the snakes
of the birthing vulvas covered
in vegetation, will go to meet
the things of caves and dens:
then they bit their tails and mouths
[phase/ /anti-phases]
and the thick archaic roots
of life and
the tumultuous fight multiply

7

there that's how the winged Dog, now,
though not knowing by which passage
he himself can bring fortune,
nor being able to explain what
souls need, all of them,
and the primordial substance
and the morning girls, and look there,
dawning obliquely, that very Dog,
from the bottom, from exile,
aware of being himself,
among others, broke through:

and from this moment, everything
the Dog, opening wide
its big foolish eyes, has rustled
and stretched, you'll see that the cry
from someone's heart will destroy it:
and without the Dog, the exact time
will come, when the complete shade
will fall upon the fig
that never ripens.

8

the burst of rays
of two stars that from below
spy on one another,
unleashes the
Blind Verisimilitude
of Definition
and the looming
in the from of Event and Intimate
Startle:

and then we entered
the ever-returning river mouth.

9

everything began here
but ends elsewhere:
elsewhere, in some portion
of the millennium

10

all the Thebans take their siesta
on a sunny afternoon, in the square,
I eat ice cream:

and that's when
between earth and sky a black
harp, the black harp, dirgeful
distance of wind ablaze
adorned the wheat field with flowers
and scattered in the air:

the melody
in Thebes long ago at times

Da *Il principio della parola*

Corpus abruptum praeruptum vastatum, Cancrulum Tropicum, Corpus Inferiale, Grande Grembo e Gambero Ingombro, il corpus rubrum di Calibano, il corpus Pausilyphon, il corpus rubrum di Januarius, di Gennaro Sanguinis Aspis, Flatulus Sapiens, Oculus Ipseicus, Fons Absurda, Meningi a pioggia; o corpus rubrum di Roberto d'Angiò, e il cuore in frustulis, semen rubrum, embryo, spapolato, in giro, a ventaglio, heart-spray. Corpus hemorrhagicum, e scomparti virali, virus arcaici semiseolti nella Carcassa Intimata dell'Homo Erectus, tout récent venu, Animelle Anginangioine, Medullae Usque Ad (noi aspettiamo un logos téléios dalle anime che han lasciato oscuri irreperibili i Teschigolgotha di Bios, con assunzione, ora sì ora no, del Lubrico) (agganciare, sospendersi al; quindi gradus ad aetates, gradus ab a evis) (tréphestai come spyrthizein) (gradus) (in frustula Policinellae) (in combustula Herniarum), lo Stomaco segreto, Esofago intimo dove si agganciano le immagini della flemma e dell'impetto, le esortazioni i deliqui i disturbi sensitivi, le turbe le sorprese le voglie i complimenti per le parentele sessifraghe.

From *The Word's Principle*¹

Corpus abruptum praeruptum vastatum, Cancrulum Tropicum, Corpus Inferiale, Wide Womb and Impeding Prawn, il corpus rubrum of Calibano, il corpus Pausilyphon, il corpus rubrum of Januarius, of Gennaro Sanguinis Aspis, Flatulus Sapiens, Oculus Ipseicus, Fons Absurda, raining meninx; o corpus rubrum of Robert of Anjou, and the heart in frustulis, semen rubrum, embryo, mashed, wandering, fan-shaped, heart-spray. Corpus hemorrhagicum, and viral compartments, archaic virus semi-buried in the Intimated Carcass of Homo Erectus, tout récent venu, Animelle Angevin, Medullae Usque Ad (we are waiting for a logos téléios of the souls that left the Golgotha-skulls of Bios dark and untraceable, with assumption, now yes now no, of the Lewd one) (hook, hang from the; therefore gradus ad aetates, gradus ab a evis) (tréphestai like spyrthizein) (gradus) (in frustula Policinellae) (in combustula Herniarum), the secret Stomach, intimate Esophagus where images of phlegm and impetus are hooked, the exhortations the swoons the sensitive disturbances, the disorders the surprises the desires the compliments for the

sexifrage² relations.

¹ Published in 1988, *Il principio della parola* is anthology collecting one poem by a number of different Italian poets, such as Edoardo Cacciatore, Alfredo Giuliani, Angelo Lumelli, Mario Luzi, Antonio Porta, Amelia Rosselli, Edoardo Sanguineti, and Adriano Spatola. None of the works bear any titles; they are simply marked by the author's last names.

²A combination of "sessi" (sexes) and sassifraghe (saxifrage).

Da Zodiaco / From Zodiac^{1*}

¹ Villa included composition dates at the end of each poem. Given that he loved to throw readers of his tracks, these dates may not be accurate: he could have written these pieces much earlier.

* Villa's original English has been set in italics in the translations.

Il sogno bruciato di Hekuba

*Lettera fuliginante fuliginosa di Emilio Villa
al poeta Nanni Cagnone
dopo l'exitus del suo vaticinio*

per purpureum iudicium
literae multa reliquit
acerrima tunc os meum tescua mentis
ossa verbi mei ne meminervis

Hekubae

somnium sit combustum
et in intumum eat
illac ubi fata perusta
miscentur, per fuliginis literas nostrae mansumque
intactam permeas ergo pyramidem acrem

this is Hekuba for you Hekuba, fredda trincea
this is Hekate for you vulvare, di dove schizzarono
fuori venti cimici

the Magnificent
the Umbrosous – λογ
take one, take a syllable, choose one!
between Cycle of Brains-Cellules
between the Swan-Lilylog Os
between the Black-Lily, Negrog Iglio
of the captured vaticinity
captured by the dark Fire
of voice

mos oris quasi piccone che picchia
sullo spettro di un macigno
sisifeo, e come un soffio
tremendo lo libra nell'alto
dell'eone

strepens flagellum clamantis in Igni
gutturum flagellet spiritu nantis

Tempus – inquit remota vox – tempus
semotum, tempus venit tempus vadit
tempus sceleris urget
tempus surget ipsius anima mundi
ab omine nudo

lex seu os verbi tunc gravior erit
quam Homo:
lex verbi hominem homine gravior adit

(circa 1975)

The Burnt Dream of Hekuba

Sooting sooty letter from Emilio Villa
to the poet Nanni Cagnone¹
after the exitus of his vaticination

per purpureum iudicium
literae multa reliquit
acerrima tunc os meum tescua mentis
ossa verbi mei ne memineris

Hekuba

somnium sit combustum
et in intumum eat
iliac ubi fata perusta
miscentur, per fuliginis literas nostrae mansumque
intactam permeas ergo pyramidem acrem

*this is Hekuba for you
this is Hekate for you*

*Hecuba, cold vulval
trench, from which twenty lice
sprung*

*the Magnificent
the Umbrosous – λογ
take one, take a syllable, choose one!
between Cycle of Brains-Cellules
between the Swan-Lilylog Os
between the Black-Lily, Negrog Iglio
of the captured vaticinity
captured by the dark Fire
of voice*

mos oris almost a pick that picks
away at the ghost of a sisyphian

gutturis sit in nihilum conversio noctis
veram hauris nemoris memorem iungulam actam
per nigra iudicia fumi et itinere functam
sed mox obruti si verbi evanuerit Ignis,
in quo incendemus?

Tempus – inquit remota vox – tempus
semotum, tempus venit tempus vadit
tempus sceleris urget
tempus surget ispsius anima mundi
ab omine nudo

lex seu os verbi tunc gravior erit
quam Homo:
lex verbi hominem homine gravior adit

(circa 1975)

¹ Nanni Cagnone (1939) is an Italian poet, novelist, and playwright. In 1975, he published a collection of poems in English entitled *What's Hecuba to Him or He to Hecuba*, based on the famous line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Geolatrice

Beh, mo' te dico, tibi, sabula, dicam.
Ho inserito l'alluce e l'unghia relativa
nel pieno dell'argilla
per cercarne i grani
per i differenti casi
che si sollevano
dai cieli serrati
per le varie categorie di anime

la sua crescita, il suo
ingrossamento, è dovuta
a ciò che soltanto spira
semplicemente spira
tra pollice in aria e alluce
in terra
non ci siamo mai conosciuti
io corpo, tu terra
se non in maniere diverse
in rami diversi e secondari
di implacabile necessità
di conoscenza, di urgenza filogenetica

la morte in fondo

all'argilla
non sarà allora
che un tenue
compiacimento
concentrica consunzione
di eteree carogne
di esangui consensi
di digestioni esterrefatte

tutto rimane nel
non-tremendo
e nelle sue rose corrose
di ventilazioni, di psicologemi
di contorti
logos sessuati: di
miraggi presunti che
chiamano dall'ultrafinito
finito nelle sue fredde
faglie, in sazia cecità di
percorsi e tane.

(1982)

Geolatric

Well, so I'll tell you, tibi, sabula, dicam.
I sank my big toe and the relative nail
in the thick of the mud
to search for the seeds
for the different cases
that are lifted
from skies barred
to the various categories of souls

its growth, its
enlargement, is due
to that which only rustles
simply rustles
between thumb in the air and big toe
in the earth
we've never met before
me body, you earth
except in different ways
in different, secondary branches
of relentless necessity
of knowledge, of phylogenetic urgency

death deep
in the mud
will be nothing
but a faint
compromise
the concentric consumption
of ethereal scum
of bloodless consents
of puzzled digestions

all remains in
the non-trembling
and its corrosive roses
of ventilations, of psychologese
of twisted
sexed logos: of
presumed mirages that
call from the ultra-infinite
finished in its frozen
faults, in the blind gluttony
of paths and dens.

(1982)

Geolatria

spezza il pane del corpo,
separa in quattro ventricoli
il canopeo del cuore rapido
fluendo in argilla
tra portici di ghiaia e cunicoli falsi
il congruo accatastato

da cumuli d'echi
d'arcobaleni incerti

dove non si guarda
né a sud né a nord
né sopra né sotto
fluttuante fanfara di immani segreti
disfano fragili brulichii
di mondi corporali
nel bisbiglio increato
di alvei di vertebre di terre scure
in preda di coscienza
l'occhio del precipizio
chiare insonni
vallate d'orecchi illumini
di gusci d'ombra a picco

di eternità
obbrobriosamente scomparse
breve tori d'onda perpetua
e agglomerati d'orge in pompa
e conchiglie gelate di essenze feldspatiche.

(primi anni ottanta)

Geolaty

break the bread of the body,
separate into four ventricles
the canopy of the rapid heart
flowing through mud
between gravel porticos and false lairs
the congruous jumbled

by heaps of echoes
by uncertain rainbows

where the gaze is cast
neither south nor north
neither above nor below
fluctuating fanfare of terrible secrets
unravel fragile swarms
of corporeal worlds
in the un-created murmur
of hives of vertebrae of dark lands
hunted by knowledge
the eye of the precipice
clear sleepless
valleys of ears lit
with peels of falling shade
with eternity
shamefully disappeared
brief bulls of perpetual wave
and agglomerations of orgies in pump
and frozen shells of feldspathic essence.

(early Eighties)

Zodiaco

quello che è sconosciuto e quel che è conosciuto
slargato canopeo del tempo che sarà
per chiuderci, come spazio futuro assiomatico, è in realtà
una offerta dell'immaginazione
circolante in vacuum

abolito nella superficie immaginaria
lo spazio di tortura come spazio
di respiro, di sospiro, di fiato
di assideramento, di precipitazione
e come sindrome sciamante
di atomi, secondo Democratico,
secondo Parmenide, secondo Epicuro
qualche sciame di abbruciante,
di annerito nello scivolo azzurrino,
azzurrastro (cifra di coagulate nostalgie)
ordine e modifiche di direzioni
vengono intimate dal polso, decifratore
di vincoli e di numeri di fissione
e così sciamano le fughe lineari
in diagonale, in obliquo, in
incrociato, in illimitata corona del
tempo analizzato, caracollante
sfinito e deprofetizzato,
precaro e inevitabile,
residuato e indeclinabile,
patria del clima, dell'offerta,
del respiro, del fresco,
del rogo universo, anakalypsis
e espropriazione
voce e cielo

il verbum schizoide, ma insieme
il servum verbum massochicum
(bocca e osso)
il molochicum os orbum
il sadicum os orbis
creano un rapporto inscenato dal quale
si trae immensa sensazione di
lievità o levitazionalità delle membra, del membro,
e inebriante senso di radialità, o radiosità.
Great, great heavens, which
a hand of painted
hand traccia, formula,
chiarisce, integra e disintegra,
semplice testimonianza
del polso precario ordinatore
di piccolo ritmo subsangue.

(primi anni ottanta)

Zodiac

what is unknown and what is known
stretched canopy of time that's about
to cover us, like future axiomatic space, is in reality
an offering of the imagination
circulating in vacuum

abolished on the imaginary surface
the space of torture like space
 of breath, sigh, panting
 of exposure, precipitation
and like swarming syndrome
 of atoms, according to Democracy,
 according to Parmenides, to Epicurus
some swarm of burning,
of blackened on the blue slide,
bluish (amount of coagulated nostalgias)
order and changes in directions
 are intimated by the pulse, decoder
 of bonds and number of fissions
and so they swarm the linear flights
 diagonally, obliquely,
crosswise, in unlimited crown of
 analyzed time, spent
 and de-prophesied caracoling,
 precarious and inevitable,
residual and indeclinable,
home of the climate, the offering,
the breath, the fresh,
the universal pyre, anakalypsis
and expropriation
voice and sky

the schizoid verbum, but also
the servum verbum massochicum
 (mouth and bone)
the molochicum os orbum
 the sadicum os orbis
create a staged rapport from which
is drawn immense feeling of
leavening or levitationality of the limbs, the limb,
and inebriating sense of radiality, or radiance.
Great, great heavens, which
a hand painted
hand traces, formulates,

clarifies, integrates and disintegrates,
simple testimony
of precarious ordering pulse
of tiny sub-blood rhythm.

(early eighties)

È una faccenda visuale

È una faccenda visuale, vista!
Mi pento delle mie mani
e della mia voce.
Volando e volendo
decretare un universo
toccai il tuo volto
photoiscente
vecchio mandarino lacerato
in tre bagliori
tre e tre volte
(dipanando) (depenando)
con la punta delle dita
muoiono sepolte le dita
sulla mano
e la tua voce in trame sconnesse muore
nell'ultimo guaito di tratti e di varianti
di onore, di orrore
nel senso più ordinario della passione liturgica.

Non c'è niente nel mio
e nel tuo mondo
di cui io non mi penta
per quanto e per quello che tu sai
la tua voce può anche aspettarmi.

Ebbi più tardi lo scarico delle maiuscole,
il flusso delle iniziali allo stato puro,
il sistema corrotto delle sospensioni,
delle parentesi, dei tradimenti fonetici
e tutto ciò mi pizzica come
un festone nel cavo delle narici
o dello sfintere.

S'imbastardirono e s'imbestialirono
allora ambedue i coglioni nostri
s'incazzarono, per dire così.

Poi morimmo ambedue nel
cuore della Belva Sanguinaria
e Sudorifera: morimmo con somma lode,
ma anche con confusa precauzione.

(1982)

It's a visual affair

It's a visual affair, viewed!
I'm ashamed of my hands
and my voice.
Flying and fighting
to declare a universe
I touched your face
photohiscente¹
old mandarin torn
in three flashes
three times three
(unraveling) (unpenising)²
with fingertips
fingers die buried
on the hand
and your voice dies in broken weaves
in the last yelp of lines and variants
of honor, of horror
in the most ordinary sense of liturgical passion.

There's nothing in mine
and in your world
of which I'm not ashamed
for as much and all that you know
your voice can even wait for me.

Later came the expulsion of capitals,
the flux of initials in the purest form,
the corrupted system of interruptions,
of parentheses, of phonetic betrayals
and every thing that itches like
a festoon in the hollow of the nostrils
or the sphincter.

So both of these balls of ours
degenerated and infuriated
they got pissed off, so to say.

Then we both died in the
heart of the Bloodthirsty and
Sudoriferous Beast: we died with full praise,
but also with confused precaution.

(1982)

¹ While the meaning behind the first part of the word, *photo-*, is obvious, the meaning of the second part, *-hiscente*, is unclear. However, the suffix “-scente” is common in Italian, as in “rinascete” (born again), “iridiscete” (iridescent), “fosforescente” (phosphorescent), etc.

² The Italian verb *depenare* means to cross out. However, *depenare*, with one “n,” is Villa’s invention. It could either mean to remove the penis (pene) or the pain (pena).

Euonirico transfer

eyios dionysios
grande grande e mite pietra del controvento
come l’odio nel creare, che di rado
capita e si uguaglia
allo stormire di struscio
delle brezze addossate alle colonne,
colonne partorite vecchie, sensazionali, fatte
avanti in procedimenti bislacchi
senza ragionevoli probabilità
di colori annodati ampex annudati
climatici, in disarmo

facce di tolla e labbra sepolcrali
quando ti guardavano dal falansterio
infante, puerile, cantando
sfrontato, sfrondato, sfranto di sfera in sfera,
con frecce in cuore e galantina
di giorni tesi e sparpagliati nel perentorio
intimo screpolo, a predare
nel folto forforeo dei capelli il meduseo
inestinguibile scandalo
di Botri e Sorci, e Scorci controsesso

strangola lo strapazzato d’occhi,
imperioso il pastore di poemi surgelati
cuori coloniali di fosforo femmina
e di tumulti irrelati, tumuli
audaci sulle dune della cornacchia
cuore di bacio che dovresti
ribattezzare in sale e in ghigno
di memorie carogne,
di antiche, antichissime volpi

a sincero tempo del guatare in giù
in fondo all'occhio vulvatica
di piramidica Medea

scansati, patriottica melma di immemorato
immortale puerperio
dall'alto di ginocchi pressati e strabiccolanti
come gli occhi del dio morto
(perché vivo non ce n'è ancora stato)
dove imperiosa vigila e scorrazza
la schermaglia, l'inafferrabile
inconsistenza dell'anima del corpo.

(1985)

Euoneiric transfer

eyios dionysios
great great and mild stone of the windbreak
like hate in creating, that seldom
happens and matches
the rustling of rasping
of breezes against the columns,
columns born old, stunning, coming
out of bizarre procedures
without reasonable probability
of knotted colors knuded¹ ampex
climactic, disarmed

brazen faces and sepulchral lips
when they watched you from the phalanstery
infant, childish, singing
shameless, sheared,² shattered from sphere to sphere,
with arrows in heart and galantine
of days tense and scattered in the peremptory
intimate crevice, preying in
the thick dander of hairs the inextinguishable
medusean scandal
of Borti and Mice, and Sights nonsex³

strangles the extra-crazy eyes,
imperious the shepherd of frozen poems
colonial hearts of feminine phosphorous
and unrelated tumults, audacious
tombs on the dunes of the hooded crow
heart of kiss that you should

rechristen in salt and sneers
of scummy memories,
of ancient, very ancient foxes
for sincere time of staring downward
deep into the vulvatic⁴ eye
of pyramidical Medea

dodgy, patriotic sludge of forgotten
immortal postpartum
from the height of pressed knees, crosseeping⁵
like the eyes of the dead god
(because there still hadn't been one alive)
where imperious he keeps watch and scampers
the skirmish, the incomprehensible
inconsistency of the body's soul.

(1985)

¹ While in Italian there does exist the adjective “denudato” (to strip or make nude), *annudato* is Villa's own invention, which is a combination of “annodato” (knotted or joined) and “nudo” (naked).

² The Italian reads *sfrondato* (defoliated) but “shread” has been used to maintain the alliteration of the original.

³ With *Controsesso* Villa is playing on the two nouns “contrasenso” (contradiction or nonsense) and “sesso” (sex).

⁴ The adjective *vulvatico* does not exist in Italian and although English has “vulval” or “vulvar,” *vulvatic* has been used to mirror the original. In Italian, the adjective rings of the noun “viatico” (viaticum).

⁵ *Strabicolanti* is an amalgamation of the adjectives “strabico” (cross-eyed) and “colante” (oozing, dripping, or seeping).

Trou

Le trou hyérogliphe
au plan de l'échine
s'adombre et dessine
en trous émotifs,
clou ou épine
dans ton ange Tueur
la mort est fine
chose diamètre
éternité ou ombre
membre-pénis regorgé
elle n'a pas de nombre
quand s'ébranle
erronée et sombre
la multiplicité branle
et partout l'encombre
entr'ou sans en être

pourrait on se connaître
pour arroser ou déchirer
des apparitions trempées
la niveau dernier qui pénètre
aux derniers degrés
jusqu'aux (sept)ans passés
nue et inconnue

langue perdue
restée pendue
relique d'aspic
dans la coupe pudique
des parenthèses à paraître.

(primi anni ottanta)

Trou
(*sensuel*)

En plein baiser !
Qu'il soit le trou
le manque qui joue
car c'est le manque à jouer
l'enjeu manqué.

Le trou le plus riche
mouche épouvante de niche
pour que toute fiche
puisse s'éclairer en messages
pour que rien de conscient
n'y touche saint-gelant
messe mise massacre

pour métrer [mesurer] s'en injectant
la distance tolemaïque
et lugubre de nos trous
ou la volonté de se sauver.

Qui est-ce qui ira
jusqu'au de là du voile
à replier l'étoile
perçante contre ciel ?
L'email de Joiele au silicium
et, par mots éclatés,
de l'hérésie verbum

jouer l'Enjeu des essences
du verbum les mille et une fois
ingiganti et rompu :
et d'où il n'y a pas d'issue
ni en dehors ni en dessus.

(primi anni ottanta)

Trou

Trous figés
au fond de la mémoire
au bout du vide
ceux qui cachent
 le miracle
 évolué
en manque en défaut en perte :
chaque miracle nourrit
un enfant dans son trou.
Dans la parole naturelle
où se trouvaient jadis
les dieux sauvages
animés d'un souffle
sifflant
leurs bruits innés
plus vifs que la mort
quand l'Ironie invisible se lève
du Trou tumultueux
de l'Horreur ultime.

(primi anni ottanta)

*Trou**

Pitié pour la chair tenace !
et pitié c'est le trou
où gît la seule empreinte
du corps ôtage !
[carnaison] chair
ingénieuse et farouche, impitoyable
postulante de la dernière âme
à régime d'outrance et d'extase
en puissance d'engourdissement
tu peux te briser effiloché en hauteur
au bout d'agonie intime
courant entre l'Apsu

et la Mort toute
image citée à jouer
sans qu'aucun trait
de ta figure muette trahisse
l'universelle cicatrice
de ton pouvoir frais
trou effronté
architecture d'ombres reliquiales.

(primi anni ottanta)

* In the original manuscript, next to the French we read: “carnagione spietata / postulante dell'ultima anima / a regime d'estasi e di torpore / puoi fremere in altitudine / nell'intima agonia / corrente tra l'apsu / e la morte tutta” [ruthless complexion / courtier of the last soul / in regimes of ecstasy and torpor / you may quiver in altitudes / in the intimate agony / current between apsus / and complete death].

futuram!

	hybridam	
sauciam		eikunculam
		seu speciem
		seu rosam
quoquo modo		iocunculam
solutam	artam	exlabratam

(Angera, 1933)

IN HELICONE

apes languebant, longiquae mente
captae feminae, ἄνυμφαι Sorores,
plenis glubentes manibus obtortum piscem
defuncti Orphei, sepeliebant, dulcedine
raptae, iuxta radices anemonum citrullum oscinem:

penis ille statim crevit olore do-
lore ac aestu, et noctis columna cernitur versa,
super quam umbras persuculptas oscitanter
indemnes rerum pellexi et floruit toto
corpore nostro a corpore scisso luna nigra,¹

super rupem denuo oblivisionis
vecors cinereus equus o[ra]culo vomitans splenduit
vermitans renes, maximis maxillis hinniens:

cuius sub lunata ungula basiliscus hiemis
trepit, subtili lingua glacie labili rauca
gemens carmen sinuosum disiecit columnam
circa:

‘urinant, o anima nostra!² – dixi –, o vherba
emaciata, o – dixi – o melacula μέλαινα,
o mieracula μύελινα, medulla,
o hieracula ἡτράϊα, visceralia, o molecula
μειλίχια, mollicia! o’

et fragmina demun universi speculi, absque
faciebus, superne capterunt turpia, αἰσχύνη,
constellationis cornua, extra luctantia lucem.

Halitus ignitus, sinsiter fonticulus, olor

infestus halebat in foribus auris
totum ENS trahens: ‘o flores – caeciter inquam –
flores cruciales, o leves apes – cecini – immundae
proboscides! vae vobis, ecce, fulminat! ite!’

palpebribus revolutis dubia fuit, arta
tamen corruptio coeli, anchylosis penis,
torquido spirando fulmine, quod labeis
tetigi et tetigi et tet

subtergens terrens subrisit fulmen,
subter erigens, rigens rictus, flexum
cordi flagellum, echeu τὺς φρίκη ἱερῆ!

ornata illucit trasenna arida motis
figuris, illucuerent curvatae res cuius rorida rota
complebat cursum

oh! της μέλαινα
ἄντυξ σελήνης

tunc demun nocturnis is os celibus faucibus
gigantium apium rapui mel et fugimus, vacuo
itinere villos volubilis pubis pieridum abstuli,
κατὰ τίλσιν, et fugi, emunctis varicibus,
sed nos impetiit solitarios versus inguinum
vulvlabilintus, cuius vulv nus nos terruit;

alta tunc ora reticui, vherba bibi Puellae,
seu της γαλαθηνῆς κόρης, quae dulcem intendit
dulcedinem, καὶ ‘Ἐλικῶν ἔτινάσσετο:

gelu infectas carnes equi esi, et fugimus
testiculis et ulivis contra ventos prodeuntibus obviam
chresto per undas libedibidinis actae,
illeporis et per gentiales cruditates:

o[ra]culum et ego diffidi, praedam Vorticis apem
alis quattuor apem instruxi et lenti Fati futui mundum:
‘cruam – dixi – errorem inverecundae Puellae, κορίνης’

et [a]pullo pallidus sanguine vherbo
ferox respondit: ‘aër non valet
plus quam oculi mei! immagini linque
Viscerum Vultum locutum!’ et nisis
est contra altam rupem mentulam inicere.

‘Misereatur nostri sterilis herrans
 pieridum vulvocus’ – clamavi, et fugimus,
 καὶ φόνος σε τιμωρεῖ, mors anima quaedam
 minuma fuit querens suimet ipsius
 effigem in anfractibus aethris migruos
 septemprionis ramos

(1934)

¹ A mix of Latin and Italian this lines roughly translates as “our body in divided body black moon.”

² Italian for “oh our soul.”

PYTHICA VANA

sta	men			stlo	cus	is				
		sis					te			
ne	sit	stat	in					si	q[uae]	
	ul	us					sti[r]ps			
		ne	vi	sen			tlo	ci		
				sus	ni		lo	cis		
				mis			oc	ul	i	
nec	sit	nex	it						is	
		ac	sat						ti	
		sti	mu	lus					us	
se	des	mi	cans							
	sat	si	dus			stel	li	o	ne	
	[mi]cans	la	[ma]			tes	te		stra	
		stel							to	
			lans						ster	
st	stil	stil	la						net	
		il	la	ur	inae			nex	en	in
	sat	men	ti	s					[s]te	
sat	ill	a	stli	s					tit	
	sat	sti	irp	is			op	tu	ma	
sat	is									
	sat	ne	mo							
sat	sit	us	ste	lae						
			sature	saturne[!]						
	sod	us	sat	ore[m]						
sat	nemo	sat	iat							
			sant	agius						
sut	ore[m]	stil	la	sut	urae					
	tes	ca	ter	mi	ni					
		es	tl	oc	us					
		in	[reb]	us						

THEATRULUM

intuta progenies, cari bambini
siete invitati ad assistere buoni
allo spettacolo¹ ‘Lacus Iactatus
Contrariorum’, seu, recisis
obsuro ligone litoribus,

immodica litura litora videsis
palpabilia, decitata; duo iaculatae
reciprocae ripae, contrusae,
calamitantes aethram cruentabunt
intutus ganeo sa tur qualo
versetur atque percellam

vultu nervis externis mobilia
atque mollia ligna, molles
creaturas, moestas infelices
mensuras, ehehu pro pop
pro pupulis expletis! dolor!

luella! purgamen! redundansque
verbum! ehehu pro pupulis!
aquae aquas arabunt, filioli intecti
putae Pythiae, atris prorutis
atque proreptis prout res

rixae dramaticae censuit
lignis figuris, fulgure superfluo
interrupto, quasi gigas insons
provocabitur ultra, generosa
exiet inciens cimex in sublicam

scaenam, ad Orphei femur instabit,
praeceptuali mucrone correptum:
fulmina denique fantia, fulmina
flantia flebunt squalidoria

¹ The Italian *cari bambini siete invitati ad assistere buoni allo spettacolo* roughly translates to “my dear children you invited to participate in the show and be on your best behavior.”

PYTHICA ACIES

glacies	facies
faecies	uries
acies	macies
mities	nucies

vehies	acies
ories	maries
mollies	prolies
species	necies

duries	renies
abies	vicies
magies	poties
peties	naties

pluries	pruries
venies	alies
seties	paries
sities	penies

in	temp
oral	ies
f[ut]	uries
fu	ries

si	ve
sor	dies
swer	swor
alt	ern

sive	facies
contra	faciem
acies	contra
necis	aciem

DAEMONOKRATEIA

sub Satanae satyri horret maxilla
temporis inanitas consumptio quaeque
orbis nos usu delicit fraudeque necamur

genii faux genis deletrix
desperataque gena luxata axilla
ehu mala mamilla!

selas selanna irrepsit
sub semine Satanae
ut per hilum ni

ubiscientiae ni
captaret cantu ni
ex tasim sinus

descen dentes radi
cis radices radices
innumerabilis quoque

captaret quotas obtectas
decli vitates ovi
ovi myster iosi

atque diaphragmata
lusorii luminis sic
atque perpetuam lepi

ditatem mundi

*PENSILINA*¹

pensilis pulchra nubecula sepulcralis
aut parva nubecula manans, farfara
revulnerum roteatio lepidula ulnis

hymenoptera recens ore iactaque larva
pubes splendidior oculo, nubes languens
palida tepidula aula raris alis

gelidis circumfusa, anginis ephelis,
equidem natae cunctae rorantes angues
mortuaeque puellulae ortae peramoenae

NARKYSS

Tempus enim vetitum quoque maius est
temporibus nullis; frigida ergo tempora
radicum:

glacies undique
nam renascetur
res nuda
quasi deus
quasi daemon
indivisibilis
sexu et igni
forsitan gramen
quidquam sit
quod non existit:
mortuus ergo
est hic sermo
in limo factus
quasi muta aqua

Pristinam ac oblioiorem libidinem hausit
adoriendi mundi, iurgii, cum mundo,
mundanae intercipiendae pristinae litis,
mundi cuius tamen in faciem restiti iurgio
et reticui:

in speculo limi
helluatus sum
caro¹ et os
caro et rosae
caro et ros
caro et ossa
prandium hirundinum

¹ *Caro* means “dear” in Italian.

PYTHICA RES

an imal
in ver
ec und
um red
di di
poen it
en tiae

et gla
brum gre
mium ge
nit al
ia ur
sit ad
aus tri

as tral
ia ia
mu tus
ru tus
qui dam
ru mor
syl vae
sal vet

cru de
in cru
dum phal
lum ef
fer um
cor ri
puit coe
lum et
em en
da vit

in quil
in a
vo lup
tas div
in it
as ne
gat iva
cup id
it as
ver mis
vir id
is it
den ti
bus ev
ell it
em a
las or
gan i
sub lim
is si
ne man
dib ula

vin dex
lae tus
que si
mul a
tus oi
strós spon
sa so
ror om
ni um
re rum
rum or
spon sa
tor ni
hil id
a men
va de
cum de
o o
pyth ic
as al
as syl
lab ans

tac tu
et in
tra frac
ta ver
te bras
con ven
i ant
tae ni
ae mul
tae lu
mi ne
or bae

GENESIS

kart			kars		
		ker			
	crin		krus		
		kres			
			kruk		
		christ	cru		
christ		cresc			
	cerast		cereal		
		cru			
			crux		
rux	aerug	rug	ros	reg	
	krugs	krag			
			crus	crura	
			crurum		
		krak	kren		
		kres			
cruen		kar	krek	car	
	crud		croct		
			khrys		
		christ	chrest		
	kre				
		crear	krew		
		caro	kreas		
			cruc		
			vera		
			carex		

LETO

leges sumerice juxta Delum
juxta Carnicas Praealpes

NI₄ .TIL utpote quae
dingir NINTILLA
dingir ni[n].til>
> *li.ti > lete

ni₄ .til h.e. Domina Potnia Vitae
e latere Costa iacta
Domina et Costa, Domina Domus τοῦ Esse
Palmula Vivens, Velans, Vulvans
inter silvam monstrorum
monstrum Apollo rite clamque nascetur

til h.e. Palmula Ridens in Ara
h.e. Costa Telum Sanguen Liliū

ad corticem glubendum,
palmulam aevi imminentis,
ossa aquae, corripiat
et sectilis lupus regnet inultus
enormitatis fraudibus unctus:

Leto scugnitia laeta
subacidi piscis pondere
ablato, Leto adlupata
lusu spasmodico levi
lustralem feram sumerice
mordat:

cydonio extruso scroto
scrofulas esit precipitanter,
glandulas, fragas,
usque ad nates terga
rudibus candida lunis
per ramos per undas per merdas instrata fugiant monstra

ARTEMIS

leges sumerice arade.me.dim.sa
ara₄, seu akkadice namru, h.e. splendescens
splendit splendida splenduit
aut sītu, h.e. exiens (luna) in coelo,
exitus (coeli) luna

de₃, seu la' abu, h.e. fax, lucens falx,
flamma lucis ignis

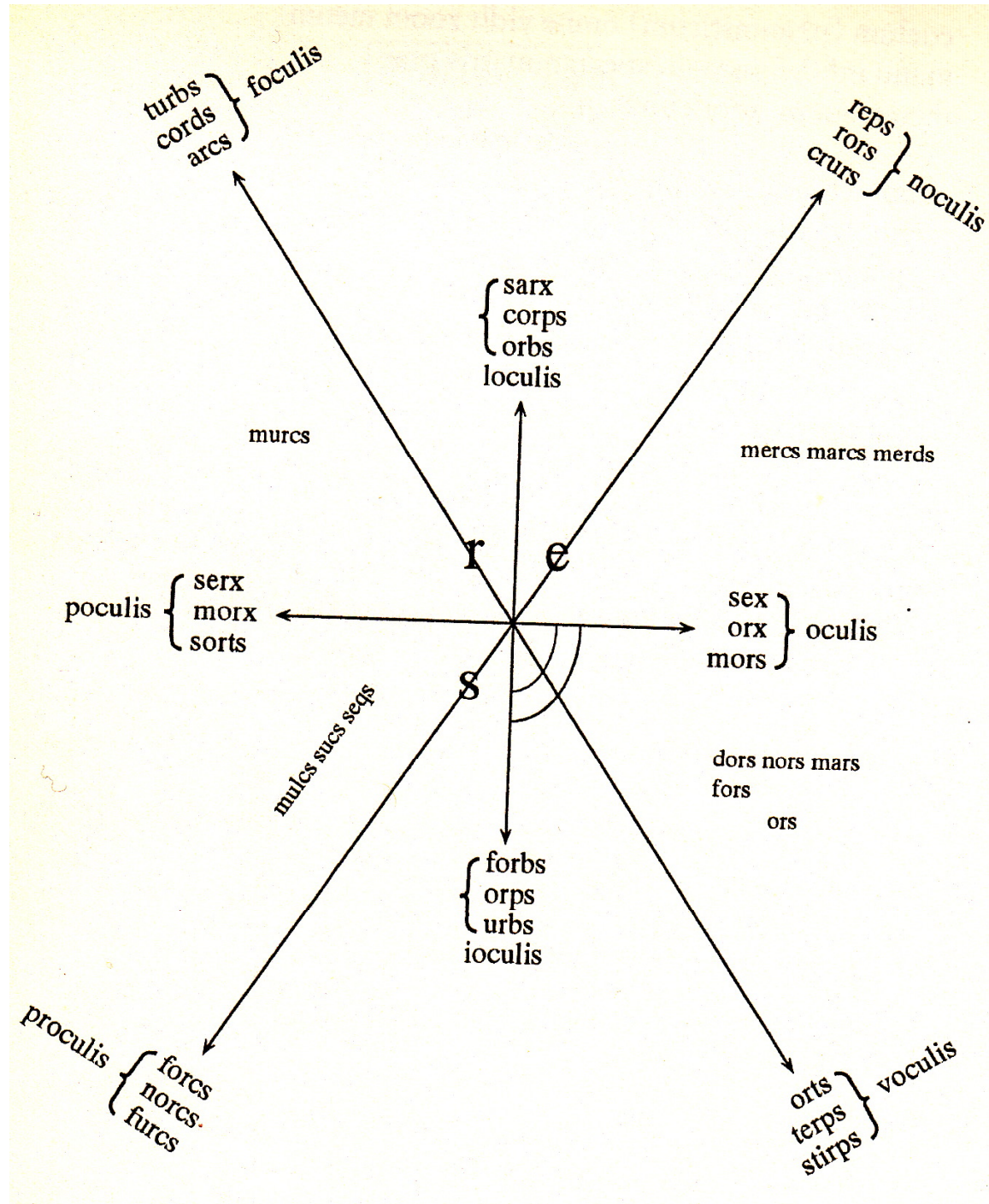
me, seu samsu, h.e. coelum et ordo coeli

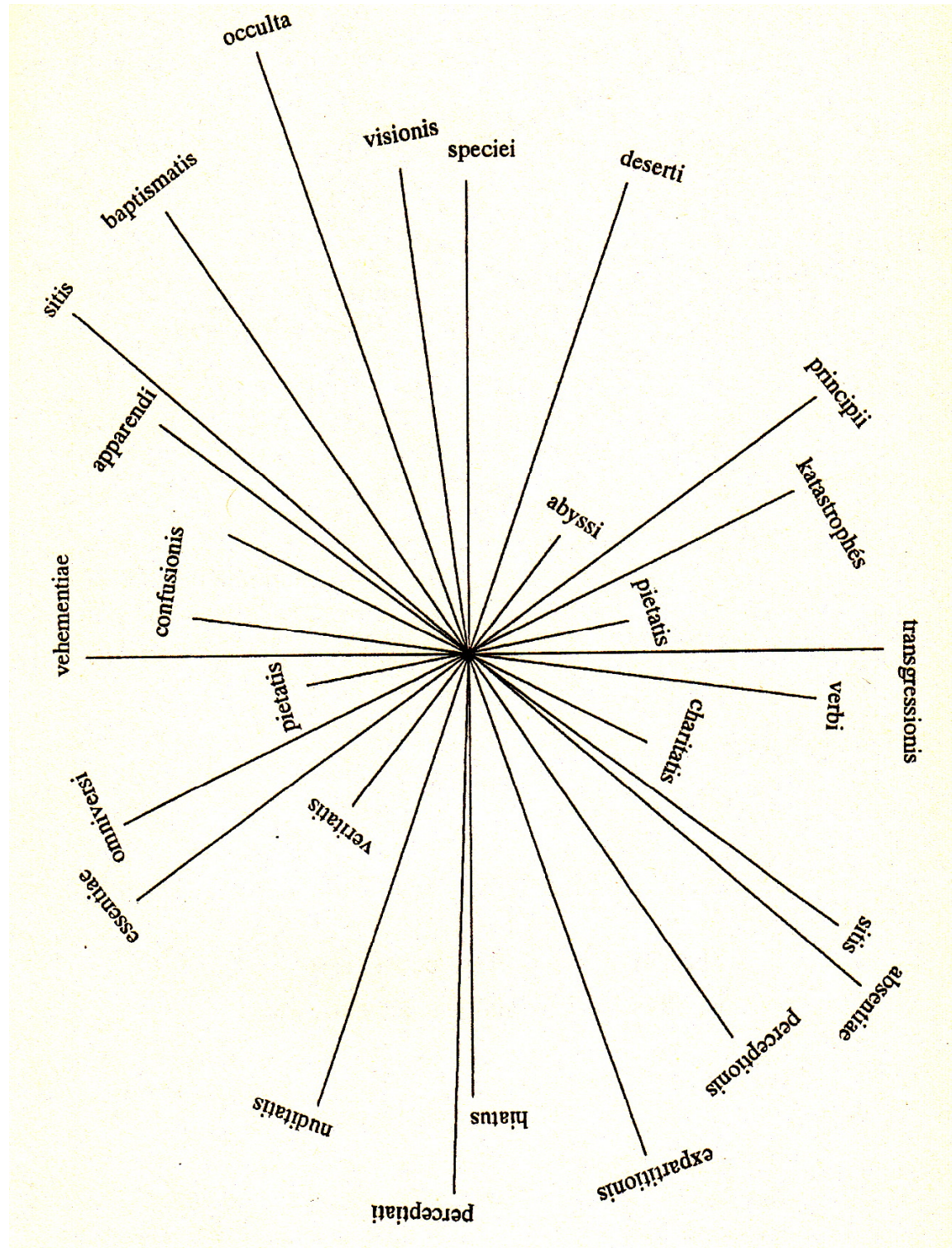
dim, seu pī, h.e. facies

sa, seu urū, h.e. vulva

vulnerabilis atque nudata vulneribus undans
fruticibus coata vulvae,
formidine corusca, subter caudice cornus
enode nubit cornu artemideum ulvae,
nubes noxia vela ac velaria, repens

subtilis descendit horrida cutis
in porcis intra lurores, fremitusque
lubrica proscindunt, erepunt curvae,
crinibus micans extinguitur equus, ansam
suburguet agonistes foeda, nigrissima riget
fabula, ulula radii scribit coelestes umbras





PETALUS VU

Vomitans Vomitatis
Vomitans Novum
Vomes N ovum
Vomitum Vorat

Visum Vehet Vox
Vehemens Vir Vix
Votum Vacuum Os
Vetat Vis N Ova

Vomere Vulnus Vacuet
Vulneris Vadit Venit
Via Verticem Videat
Viridis Varia Vegens
Vertigo Vastet Vultus

Vulcam Vundae Vasae
Vultures Volant Vult
Versus Valeant Venena:

Vulpes ehú, ehéu Vulpes
Vanuerunt Verecundiae
Vehú! vehú! vuú Vitulus
Vocat Vanvera¹ Vulvat
Virus Vacca Varuna
Viridi Veste Vestita
Vaporis Vela Versa
Vena Haesa

¹ In Italian, *parlare a vanvera* means to “babble on.”

HERCULES

cum constet deum mortuum
herculem fuisse etiam
dingir sumerice^{dingir}
EN . MER . KAR
(heros deus, frater Astartis,
Solis filius et Terrae Matris)

[per *(en)merkar, inde
*(en) werakr/l
eureka, mehercle!] unde hymnus:

tribus lucentibus
testiculis tractis
appareat her
cul es
ver tebras ebrias
plic ans
ovul ariter ter
rore

arc uter
alter uter
ulter uter
matr uter
ter
ror ter
tae

HERMES

ani ma lat oris
tum oral ium cel
lu lar um
in cap sul is
ab scon dit us

an us hud us
hum us

ebr ia ci
vi li tas
vis i bil is
aetate aestate
aetute aedeque
adiuta, mehercle

visi in
bil isis
hor rore
ord rore
am ore
hum ore
trans duc tus

trans lat io
sum er ice
dingir URU₃ . MAS

h.e. deus dingir EN . NU . GI

PROBLEMA A

A
axium plurium plurimus axis
plurimus actus cricumaxialis
unica A modularis A anxia
maximi maxima mixti axis spiralis
genero alieno sonat resonat amens
A modularis turbata atque praesecta A
circinum furiose ictitando usque ad nullam
icunculam

*vidi intactus
tabulas speciosas,
super eas conscripsi
salientibus literis
ad animas luce
rumpendas, easque
tibi reddo conscriptus*

GEOMETRIA REFORMATA

plus ***
Pythicum
Nutum
adiecit
aemilius
lauri
fumis
incitatus

ex Labiis
deae ATHΣ
omnia accepi
omina traham
quae novi quae scripsi

RENOVATUM	MUNDILOQUIUM
NOVA	PARIET
LINEARUM	MENSURA
<i>INTERMINABILE</i>	<i>NEVENTIUM</i>

AEMILII DONUM
PRO CLAUDIO, ὁ γεωμέτρης*

* Villa dedicates this piece to the Italian visual artist Claudio Parmiggiani (1943), with whom he collaborated on a number of projects later in his career (see bibliography). The title *Geometria reformata* comes from one of Parmiggiani's shows held in Zurich in 1978. Villa subsequently composed his poem around the artist's work contained in its brochure.

nostra rixa omnis extensa
nigra ἔνέργεια
vis veniat
vis veniat ubi inferior
interior superior halitus
reflans fons luceat
adsiduus fomes
linea nondum sana videatur
et iter cineris in turbinem recedat

per os et oer es
in oculo et in poculo
serenus ruit ros

deus subtilis dies noctis
donum silens aedes muta
regit infirmitatem rerum
magnam animam tegat
sub vitreo aestuario
sub infirma ala
ipsam vim generans in labiis
ipsam infirmitatem urens in labiis
neminum fontis obscurae clara in neminis ore fictio

et derelictio derelicta, oh oh,
stercoribus nutrix, ah ah,
saeculi simulatrix!
(!αἰῶνος σημαντικόν σπέρμα!)

nubes dissipabuntur
in petribus sedebimus

margo moritur
aeque ac ars
longa cinis
urens vivit
futura futurans

ac nec et or ut hic ab ob

ortus ac obitus suffocet nidum
moeror medullae cranium
sectus sexus suturam in nihilum

ἀνάπτυξις
impotens nesus lamae
sacra rixa comperit mentem

ἀνάπτυξις
vestigia premitans lineae
atque anhelitus palmitans

quandoquidem animans
linea clare delirans
visus absconditus
in intimus artubus

paululum febris
paululum vitae
paululum mortis

ἀνάπτυξις

et in oculo coacta
compulsa tandem libido

ἄ

αἰῶν τοῦ ἄλφα καὶ τοῦ ὤμέγα
lux sadex lex sedens

lux sadica

(cru克斯pes)

(moxnex) micans

(pul chrum abspectrum)

de pheretro aëris

(nuxnox)

(maxillis) ob rerum aerumnas

subversum fit visceribus imis Proelium

et postquam Parvi Filioli parva verpula
a parvo pube Sanctissimae Matris
salsos Fluctus proscidit astralis Uterus
uti Sphaera per undas aegeas ruit,
secreta alii Daemonis species, tremitans
insatiata Libido Inguinis

!Abyssus est linea , Purus pater –

!Linea est Abyssus , Pura mater –

imago purae infirmitatis suae

subrepens [Strages] unda

ab Angulo gemens denuo gignitur

ab Anguine anguis clara leporis

tabula

elixa jaceant lemures
lineis scalenis obnoxii
sensum sepulcrum
per lineam exsuctae
Ob li vi o nis,
pulpa rerum.

ehuehu quantum volnus
in cerasia una! et quot
sonus in sanguine –
in idipso – –

Oedipus, sub luce Fulguris,
soror atque frater Speculi,
(subcisa sententia), mentem
Sororem puniat aequae ac
nidificet –

Corpus, Temporum Aciem,
Corpus maximum, de Signo
minissimo, eruant
Fulgures HHH

Usque ad intimos sinus in aëre
et sic semper simul interim
invisibiles semitae vagulae
portiunculam thesaurizant

horror in vagula spicula
dormit et regnat – per
pendiculatus pandiculatus pensus –
quia linea carnis in lumpa sanguinis

Sol Imus
 Infans Infima
 Proles
 Pronus
 Protinus
 Procax
 Prosus
 In Cerebro
 In Delapsu Somnii
 Pudens
 Punctum
 Caecum
 Obdurescens Ille Ignis Oculus

audi accipe contraiacturae desiderium amen-omen
audi ergo accipe n omen s emen n emen n udum

et quid in arcu sine gemitu uteri
et quid in utero sine gemitu spicae

patent Deorum Deorum Deorum stamina
aut ultra cellulam in aenigmate Campi

terrarum mensurae iaculant
in Corpore Corporis, in Terra Terrarum,

res in numine ora quatiunt
usquedum (p)o(s)culum moritur
abstruso Loco spirante

ruit Terra Terra ruit
spica feriet parietem

natus est natis X,
lapis desonat, X verbum
corrupta lapis X gignit,
lancinans fossa Locum corripiet:

pars genitata	ultra genitat
rebus luctantibus	partam larvam
	astralem rorem

linearula ferens
linearula foetens
linearula feriens
linearula futuens

linearula moerens
linearula nutens
linearula metiens
linearula moriens

sol in nnumero
favilla cucurrit,
mundus roravit
rosam rorantem,
sol in numero
lineas retulit

aculeum insitans
dehiscens totus orbis
anima statu tota
mens macie oriens

patens patiens res rem gignit
nemen geometricum nemen aerometricum

nemina neminis numina numero nherent
nemen ullum nemen nullum g enitum
clam et palam
ad neminanda n omina n hemi nata
g eminata

veniant reveniant atque immo revenient
nemina coniventia

quiescant nemina sive
in lucem redacta
in corpus dirata
in aedem coacta
in arcum peracta
in aciem exacta
in lapidem subacta
in gradus inacta
in locum obacta
in rem acta

copula

locus

nemus

caput lacus stuprum

nemen

stupor

semen

fabulae meantes extinguuntur
fabularum extinctio
rupit homogeneous id,
homogeneous locum adstantem,
homogeneous statum totum,
homogeneous rem universam lacerat:

finibus suis res respondent
ad insidias invisibiles a speculo coecitatis
retrahendas et adsimulandas

sint res denique
nec entes nec nihil
sed solum ea
erratica linea litoris

omniversae Strgis
ἐν τῇ τοῦ ὑστάτου ὀγέθρου ἐρίπνη
(uti ita scribam)

linea dein sit tibi
id quod non est
nec alia sit ultra
linea lineis res destruens
linea linei causas causis subripiens

boom – rang
boom – going
boom – gang
boom – gag
boom – bang
in aenigmate
arulae
in tethrachte
obstaculum
oraculum
super daemonum acus
orbis ruinae m ori(un)tur

(sit) tandem daemonum nomen
nom iam ΛΟΓΟΣ
nom iam ΜΥΘΟΣ non iam
nom iam ΦΟΝΟΣ
nom iam ΤΕΧΝΗ

sed

ATH

sit –
sit Ate noster daemon merus, prospectus –

deest aut desit a somniis illa aleatoria arboraranea
cuius radix in coelestis aequoribus vivit
et frondes ubique super as subter – ea demun longa
longiqua linearum linea, ea vera et firma et praetermansura

linea datur aut detur
obscurus lateat
sulcus inmanis
avidus avis
flagrat in acu
frinit frendit
frigit frangit
conum soni
solum solis
umbra iungit
tempus tempore
ultimum iacet
universi speculi
os
laetus cadet
ὄκτις

lineis laxis erepta columna
universa labatur insidia
time mensuram! transeuntem! per hos radsmos
per haec frondia
ultimae lanceae
pondus
rari splendoris –
arsura et mensura
complexae sunt se
et in virga fumi,
linea orietur gnu da,
in metagorica obsidione,
ex moesto ingenio,
ad inexorabilem miscelam
percipiendam,
diro mucrone mentis

nunc ergo r a t i o
firma atque infirma
in nigra hora nuda
suffocet mutum Sulcum

!

Da 12 Sibyllae / From 12 Sibyllae*

*Here we offer eleven of the twelve “sibyls” originally published in 1995 (see bibliography). Other sibyls have been published in extremely limited runs (as poster size prints or metal etchings), but the series is in reality much larger: there exist some hundred unpublished sibyls in various languages. However, their fate is unknown, for the original manuscripts are not found in any of Villa’s official archives.

Sibylla (cumana)

involucrus penis elucens mirabilibus altis
chronitrualia, choritrualia, scortitrualia
castissima custos mundi repleta sonore
la forza del diluvio non ci trascina più
 con la sua seduzione intermittente
 di cuore caduco geografico risvegliato
 in dualità perenne, res opaca
 tu epileptualis obstinata
aspergenza cryptopluviale, hyadica, caronica
bilis involucrum aperietur
mi cadono dall’anatomia cruda prevista di ali perdute
 le scapole i gomiti il coccige la rotula
 il perone, scabina, excarminat vertigine pubis
cruciale obprobrium mentium februarialium
et novae relationes redeundae reperitiones
ma il quotidiano, matutina iaculatio iactatio
 nell’antiquum, ci esaspera alleviando
 la nostra impunita ragione di non
 credere più né all’ombra né al
 ventriosum skeleton perruptis ossibus sacris
come radici piccolissime che vedono oltre la
 immensa parete di tufo, e oltre quella
 procedono e vanno, salpano, dalla notte
 al mattino presto, e poi si addormono
 senza pensare, senza vedere
gli idoli della tua aedes moriranno tutti
 nel sangue ianuario miseno
 per aprire sangue e bocche
 e vagine flegree
 vene e carogne
per lamentarsi con lo spirito del sangue e della fama
e portare la nostra puerizia al loro ombroso simulacro.

Sibyl
(*Cumaean*)

involucrus penis elucens mirabilibus altis
chronitrualia, chorituaia, scortiluaia
castissima custos mundi repleta sonore
the flood's strength no longer drags us
 with its intermittent seduction
 of fleeting geographic heart awoken
 again in perennial duality, res opaca
 tu epileptualis obstinata
cryptopluvial, hyadic, charonic aspergence
bilis involucrum aperietur
they fall from my crude anatomy with built-in lost wings
 shoulder-blades elbows coccyx kneecap
 fibula, scabina, excarminat vertigine pubis
cruciale obprobrium mentium februarialium
et novae relationes redeundae reperitiones
but the daily, matutina iaculatio iactatio
 in the antiquum, exasperates us relieving
 our unpunished reason from not
 believing any longer in either shade nor
 ventriosum skeleton perruptis ossibus sacris
like the smallest roots that see beyond the
 immense wall of tufa, and go and
 proceed beyond it, set sail, from night
 till early morning, and then fall asleep
 without thinking, without seeing
the idols of your aedes they will all die
 in the ianuario miseno blood
 to open blood and mouths
 and Phlegraeon vaginas
 veins and carcasses
to complain to the spirit of blood and fame
and bring our youth to their shady simulacrum.

Sibylla
(*foedus, foetus*)

Quando, da piccolo, nondum puer, strinsi un patto con te sui
giochi delle parole senza senso, foedus inicisti:
ora tu non hai tenuto fede al nostro foedus,
 foedus iniecimus
 foedus transgredieris.
Ma io, stipite e lancia della tua infedeltà, ho voluto tentare a
mia volta le più delicate e voluttuose trasgressioni

le deiezioni più sconsiderate,
 in fuori e in dentro rovesciando le fodere del foedus tenebrale.
 Certo, tu hai avuto vergogna di me,
 tu hai abbandonato i miei anfratti,
 tu sei di nuovo fuggita nel deserto dei sensi, dei segni, dei
 chiarori io ti inseguo e disegno con risibili fulminazioni
 infelix exeat ergo copula nostra et aures nostrae flatu erecto
 impraegnabuntur
 siamo ancora due solitarie sparsae sibille, io e te, che si
 specchiano in faccia, in feccia, in furia, in fauci inficiate
 come due angeli stupidi e assorti, angeli mutuae faciei.
 In realtà non sappiamo dire che cosa sia il dire,
 quid sit dicere.
 Consegna e consiglia alla malinconia perennitatis, la tua
 perentoria assenza: evoca, erigi, brucia silenzi irragionevoli
 in cerchi salienti di polvere absurditatis
 è una lama di assenza che ci unisce, in una roteante ragnatela
 di inutile desiderio
 di chiasmo feroce.
 Mutus quandoquidem inveniar et censear in cinere lucis obrutae in
 fulgoris laminae acie.
 So che non mi pento e la tua sovrilluminante tenebra ancora mi stringe, a
 memoria, in libertà, in paradossia
 i limiti banali del nostro intelletto rimandiamoli,
 risospingiamoli più in là, oltre la nostra manipolata immagine
 fonetica.
 Anche il suono in fondo è un vestigio fastigio, un vestidio
 fastidio e tra me e te si è spalancata una cisterna di specchi contraddittori,
 ripiegati in fuori.
 Ti chiamo a gestire questo rotolante imperversante silenzioso
 caos la limitata tempesta del nostro indiavolato nascondimento.
 La ribellione dell'immagine è pronta, preparata da tempo, e non
 c'è misura che si attesti ad arginarla o a liberarla
 solum approbrium remorae consentiam extremae.
 Ti manderò quattordici procreazionali apostrofi di protoeschata
 proporzione e quattordici posizioni astratte attratte un obelos e
 tre spazature per tre hapax assoluti uno steccato di sterpi per
 neumi secchi e un iota: lavora tu, piccola ignota, con le tue
 illuminazioni camuffanti da scialbo intelletto qualche cosa che
 provenga da mutilati orizzonti immaginari di inconcepibile
 travaglio.

Sibyl
(foedus, foetus)¹

When, in my youth, nondum puer, I made a pact with you about

meaningless wordplay, foedus inicisti:
now you didn't keep your end of our foedus,
foedus iniecimus
foedus transgredieris.

But I, jamb and spear of your infidelity, decided it was my turn
to try the most delicate and voluptuous transgressions
the most thoughtless defecations,
outside and inside reversing the lining of the tenebrous foedus.
Of course, you were ashamed of me,
you abandoned my coves,
once again you fled into the desert of the senses, of signs, of
glares I follow and draw you through laughable illuminations
infelix exeat ergo copula nostra et aures nostrae flatu erecto
impraegnabuntur
we're still two solitary sparsae sibyls, you and I, who look
each other in the face, in filth, in fury, in festering fangs
like two stupid absorbed angels, angeli mutuae faciei.
In reality we can't quite say what saying is,
quid sit dicere.

To perennitatis melancholy, consign and confer your
peremptory absence: evoke, erect, burn unreasonable silences
in salient circles of absurditatis dust
it's a blade of absence that binds us, in a whirling web
of useless desire
of fierce chiasmus.

Mutus quandoquidem inveniatur et censeatur in cinere lucis obrutae in
fulgoris laminae acie.

I know I don't repent and your over-illuminating darkness still grips me, by
heart, in freedom, in paradossia
let's send back the banal limits of our intellect,
let's push them back even further, past our manipulated phonetic
image.

Deep down even sound is vestige fastige, vestidious
fastidious and between you and me opened a tank of contradictory mirrors,
bended outward.

I call on you to manage this tumbling raging silent
chaos the limited storm of our wild hiding.
The rebellion of the image is ready, for a while now, and there's
no measure capable of controlling it or freeing it
solum approbrium remorae consentiam extremae.
I'll send you fourteen procreational apostrophes of protoeschata
proportions and fourteen attractive abstract positions an obelos and
three spaces for three absolute hapax an enclosure of twigs for
dry neumes and an iota: get to work, you little stranger, with your
camouflaging illuminations of a dull intellect something that
stems from mutilated imaginary horizons of inconceivable

toil.

¹ In Latin, *foedus* means “treaty” or “pact” and *foetus* “fetus.”

Sibylla
(nativitatis)

Perit cuniculus
duarum coniuncte
matrum aevorum:
in atro principio
in principio alterno
in impetu aetatum
vis ruinet lunaris
luna sub aris
sol extremus in alis
pro corpo reitate
naturis omnibus rariore
sit differens, penetret
impuram materiam
luminosae phalena
utriusque sub undis
phalli coelestis
a latere tonitruum
memorialis partus atque
generationis fluxus demetriacus
sensus superior legendus
in asperis aris
matrem maturnam
ab ovibus trahat
et recens fomentum
obscuret sacrum pavorem
mutetque pavorem
in Occultum Pavonem,
radiantibus brachiis
in diaphanis orgiis
ad monogamicam seductionem
revisitandam in epithalamiis
matricis oculus apex
adactione protrusus
lanua, ianua! descendas
ad aphroditico remorso
fugiatque sol pugnax
ad currendam viam
sterilem letalem laetaminis
per herpetem ventorum
nactus iugiter perennis

laetetur omnis
natus facie mortali
victor humani lassus leporis
sub praetelluricis entibus.

Sibylla
(euphemia)

fliga (a)ut pliga
plica (a)ut plaga
plex/ cul(te)rius
impanta nata
το εν τῷ παντί
regio pro miscua
egi hodie ego
endemica urgit
omnium illarum
rerum summa
et quantum nescire
necesse censetur
demum tandem resurget
comicae solutiones
columnae coelestis
endemicitatis
en demi civitatis
rararumque ranarum
quas genuit palus

barometron subter lucernam
oinonque vinumque
ubicumque syllabavit
auspicia ad edunda
in unda tremorum

nec erba unquam
postea unquam increvit
in aera absque amore
aut nigrum hilum
serpsit per campora

dyspathica aut despotica
satrapia pilaria
enumerando hilos
et nigros pubium pilos
ventosae momiae.

Sibylla
(Kallas)

kallas
 sibylla
 kale
 ferocia vulnera illa
quae oculos tuos mirabilia tangunt
 et ungula
 angulata
coagulata
 uvula
 visceribus mersa
ne fallas.

Sybilla
protula

protula portula A
 portulaca
protótomos protótelos
 regnat
in glandis uterina
 hortularia erosione
rotulae fiss
 ura
 urinae
 coeli
 palatus
indemne carumque
 taumatum
 signum
cadaveris cranii
 heu
 heuheu
porcula ac nitida
 pulchraqua
 porclaneta
 ave
 tiana
 aura regnans
 in
 montibus
 deviridatis
implexa promiscua

regio rationis
fati
fututi
ita ut fraus
reveniat mirabilis
arboris
mumutae
et memoriae fluens mammilla
uber
ubique.

Sybilla loquitur

et nunc oosmatici focus germinis
ulti acti
spectrum flagrat nunc
reputate virginis olim:
forte ex quadam gynaikokratia
nascitur omne
fomentum necnon fera illaesaque
omnia crescunt.

Sibylla (labia)

Sibylla labialis, alis labi queas, limine clam
sugillata, syllaba labyrinthia, labilis labi lilium
syllepsis, invisibilis Valangae immota Soboles! tota
lubilia verba leporis larva austrina helluetur, undique
unde sont orsa : hic tandem
sibylla avia te distaedeat
sibylla habeat sibyllabia sibyllalia
tibi sepulta citrulla, ignota sibylla
sarabanda syllyba paranympa,
sibilla alioquin subulta, sub ignota saepilla,
subnigra subusta pupula exsurge,
everbera, sortesque subige mutas!

antequam alicubi a nobis galaxia retrocedat
et ipsamet tu saltem insili ad ultra! veñ a vulter!
verbi flagitiis istius modi selas quoque prome:
perpetuumque vomat ignet tuae alula facis
et album mel statim ab anxia pupilla vanescat:

transitabilis tum iam migratio perempta

adnihilatio prompta peruret
maturas exempti mundi latitudines artas, eritque
interea quidam ventus qui per orbis
transibit sine tempore ruto,

isque una unam emittet magnam
vim, vi intellectus magna
absque clausulis latebrisque sonoris
et partu dulcedinem actam
eiciet arecendo: sic intus

et sic queas ipsa in ipsius tui lumen
selabi! c'est la vie; atque illuc immorari,
dum caput coeli
perpes petiat mordat angor mundi minor:

cor enim vadit cor venit, dein vetus cor
vortit horam procul simulque etiamdum
immotum pererrat, et paulisper
te slutat ultimam effrenam
syllabatam sibyllam, berecynthiam
meam, meam verecundiam, meam undam.

Sibylla
(Vedova
Vidua
In Dividua)

fama rerum periit iam et iam
huc et illuc periit

grandiosa molecola aequifocalis
in mappa e disordine acquificalis
polytopa compacta aequivocalis
monade di gargarismi aequifaecalis
oracolata di nidi, arule, pagine,
tane, essenze, remeggi,
grumo e torrenti
di fustigazioni
in groviglio e in erezione
traesecolata vidua arbor decrescens
tuae tui ipsius multiplicatae
longae identitates
in ascensu atque descensu sineque mora
transitus in ara

confitere te praearismaticam esse induisse vestem
venuto per il tempo mutato
di redigere il cespuglio
delle tue uniche identità
l'accumulo compatto e il culmine
il climax aequivoco
scintillante nebuloso.

Sibyl
(Widow
Vidua
In Dividual)

fama rerum periit iam et iam
huc et illuc periit

grandiose molecule aequifocalis
in map and disorder acquificalis
compact polyrat aequivocalis
monad of gargling aequifaecalis
lady oracle of nests, arule, pages
dens, essence, rowings,
clot and streams
of beatings
entangled and erect
traesecolata vidua arbor decrescens
tuae tui ipsius multiplicatae
longae identitates
in ascensu atque descensu sineque mora
transitus in ara
confitere te praearismaticam esse induisse vestem
that came for the time transformed
to draw up the bush
of your unique identities
the compact accumulation and culmination
the climax aequivoco
cloudy sparkling.

Sibylla
(trifida)

printed of
printed of Bétail
by the
Transfixed Ptah
Aegyptia and Latin

Laid
of Bethel
of Betulla
little Emotion
little Emotion
li tell Haemation

kosmos olos
ne efficietur
insalubribus lamentis
aut rimpianti
necnon gemitibus rosarum
kallarumque
bilateralis calor
guttam extinguat
incertam

Good, God: I am amazed!

imparando tutte le noie
e tutte le nozioni
che non sono e non
nascono
nell'utero verbale
nox pleurica varat

good, good: I am amazet a

noi due oracoli
copie sbiadite di sopravvivenza
la vita si apre verso l'ora nona
si trucca verso le nove
si annoia verso le nove

good, God: i Am Am Am Azed!

voi sibille
che avete passato tutti i millenni
sulle foglie
a decidere che cosa
bisogna non dire
e che cosa bisogna
fare

Good, God: I am amaZed!

e in tutti noi
trascorrono
le nostre proprie piccole
parole malate
di voracità
di voragini.

**Sibyl
(trifid)**

*printed of
printed of Betail
by the
Transfixed Ptah
Aegyptia and Latin
Laid*

*of Bethel
of Betulla
little Emotion
little Emotion
li tell Haemation*

kosmos olos
ne efficietur
insalubribus lamentis
aut regrets
necnon gemitibus rosarum
kallarumque
bilateralis calor
guttam extinguat
incertam

Good, God: I am amazed!

learning all this nonsense
and all these notions
that aren't found and
aren't born
in the verbal uterus

good, good: I am amazet for

us two oracles
faded copies of survival
life opens around the ninth hour
puts on her make up around nine
gets bored around nine

good, God: i Am Am Am Azed!

you sibyls
who've spent every millennia
on leaves
trying to decide what
must not be said
and what must
be done

Good, God: I am ama Zed!

and through all of us

flow
our own little
words sick
with voracity
for the void.

Sibylla ndrangheta
(indecentrica sive indecens eccentrica lutra)

salamandranguita
heu turpiter remota deplumis
sturna, incensum emblema probolon
sturna saturna introgrediariis
turma in dranguita intrat
in trangueta angorea
in aescula inquieta
indrangena indrongeta
androgina dendrangeta
mandragula extrangulata
ingenerata semisanguis
hydranguis
artranxia antrangula
indramatica faux olim
eructans ab ovo
indroguaina endroorgana
indogunanta androngyna
cataracta sortibus expoliata
urtica defraudata
defrondata
indramatica regula rata.

Letania per Carmelo Bene

les colombemots ont toutes troujour un ciel à éventrer
pour en abattre la mémoire sur le miroir des instants sonores
les lé
ta nie à lécher
en dérogoir
pour
carmelo bene à
redomander érection
rédemption et
vigueur de
vous voix voir de toi
qui nous, les tous, oblige et nous opte

Héron iridescent aux éclats vert-noir
en éclat verbevoir des glandes sans limite
tu aura bien pu saisir entre tes crocs
la grêle du Temps Dur, exilé mûr,
du Temps-Dieu de Blessure, Tant d'Yeux
en trace des Golfes d'Ombre, et l'Ombre
qui beugle, du Tout d'Yeux,
le long les Feuillages sans racines
liées aux rêves des vivants –
et pu trouer pu crever le Collapse
oratoire des Vidéo-Je des Jeux
Imprévisible rhéteur revolé revolu des représailles
en défaite, Arbitre pour aveugles
aux rats tués aux raids d'ouir
voix diacre voix à raid grenu

pour plaindre pour te plaindre sur les ongles
sur les As sur Bois sous Poudre sous Cendre
entre Thèbes et toi tout Vu, Thèbes
règne et défait ta voix toute nue noircie
toute desquamée dessaisie polluée
qui faisait disparaître le Lieu à descendre
in con nu ir rité chaque grain
ritué du Symbole Paresseux, à Vœux
et à Symbole Santgrenue Voile
où gît ta Grande Vide Perle-Parole
Grandevoix Vivante dont deferle
L'eau collab
se a l'Ab su/à l'Ab
side des choses des mystères en joues luxées

Bien, Béné ! c'est ta Voix en Goître
ta Voie Sablé qui t'Alignée
tarissable, l'A qui beugle impalpable
déjà dit, ta Voix oblique remplie d'air
à la chasteté du jeu innombrable
qui éloigne le monde, le monde
qui retient absent le „, l'horizon
escarpé d'horizon froissé

 c'est ta Voix en Gouffre
aux luxures exposées dégorgees vives
les fourrures alarmées d'A bsinthe
 d'A psou
 d'A bsous
du jeu à la chasteté corrive

en latrat aboyé, A infrason breuvé
en faim et en soif dégorge de L'A byrinthe
issu bobine l'A voix byrille
 qui lappe l'O lascif
en fines scènes de Lèvres les l'ivres
livrées sur l'A raignée
du Mime qui règne Sublime, Béné ;
du Mime qu'un Monde anime et éreinte !
les mots hâlés rosier
en jeux d'échecs ruisseaux
en jeux d'éclats rugeux
en despote chaque grain de ton bûcher !
les mots allés à rigolade
en jeu d'échéances et regret
les mots en chagrins poinçon
les maux en échanges chas grins
les maux hélés par A bol
en jeu d'essence
je d'incences, insens jeu d'inceste des croyances détériorées
bienéné bien née parabole
folle voix écrite martyrisée sur l'écran
rompu de terre rie eau rhée à passerelle

mon ami aimé, le Grand aimé, des tempêtes !
qu'est-ce que c'est qui te libère ?
qu'est-ce que c'est qui te possède ?
le mots hululés en vacarmes
en jeux sulfurisés de charmes
en jeux supplique supplice d'élan
 pour A A et ripaille donc, pu ta haine
 pour C B et engendre donc

in rito di genuflessioni di mirabunda
 cecità, mirabilis Unda quando leva
 la vulva vanesia dell'eidolon labiale,
 come una bella Preda e respirosissima vela
 equilatera, la cedola dei lessici carogne
 fitti fitti come le trecento pareti della cynara solymus
 e venerare the Queen of the incarnadine
 Death, incarnadine Death of Star,
 lei stessa, la medesima, e insieme
 sa ma ri t'haine, jaspure de haleine
 euchariste, mari tène, samaritaine, gouffre diadème
 s'amar item, triage de ténia, elle même
 la Voix, elle là, elle mène
 en érème en hérésie en herbe autres,
 elle même, seu ipsa ipsaque salus
 animae animatae salus eremi
 jardin du délire autre du repas du trépas
 illa ipsaque Comestibilitas Undae
 illa Grandis imaginum Unda voculata,
 vox hi hi, vox hi fi, vox hieroglypha
 vox labilis, vox lubricitatis, vox labyrinthica

la Houle toute Houhoule des Images Emues qui errent
 Images Absoutes à l'Assaut des Spécifs,
 à l'arrache de l'Araignée des Pierres
 anima di voce Assolta all'elabia
 reclining Ear ad burned Amygdale
 A Myg Dal
 et munda Mundi A nimula
 et blanda Fax Faciebus (Di)vitiata,
 numina mun dii mund is
 h.e. omnia munda mundis undis
 l'audelà de tout Mi(ni)stère obrué
 min ystère mystère Félé miroir-mésentère,
 du aux yeux-grains secoués par la Larve
 intrasmisible enfin, in pilicula Salomé,
 et la non occultable Auditio
 auditionem audientes audibitis
 par trombes et tuyaux murènes
 ganglions et vives salives
 angles et tue-yeux, tuyaux,
 tout je nous en tout genoux

en gambade et akrobatie vives reculées
 en paraphonésis autour des épaules nues
 noue-ramures nues-bleures

de chaleurs silumées ouvertes, nu feu du feu
incessant
pour l'Antagoniste résumé imperturbable
véritable A (e)ndrogyne jouant
carmélange mélange en voix et lait
pour les treize répertoires de l'éclairage enseveli
grande tempestoso Atto
più magnificente Attore
o Histrio o Clown o gran millenario
Sciamano, intatto Sciamano dell'Eone
per cui traggo dal mio Innologio:
Vocis Voce Iridescens Ridens vix
Inve in ictu vocis
terascens Optuma Librata!
summe ergo Histrio culmine Arbor
rubescens vigeas Haruspex
et Fulguriator Carmen τοῦ Ἐλ
Carminator, genialiter ultima Umbrae
genio vocis vox Uta maxima Mundi,
flatus Mundi e io non so più cosa o cosa

conviene di voce alla criniera immatura, demetriaca,
della tua voce.

Bene! bene! Bene dicas illud Benebene
in venis ultimis, in vanis ultimis, in ultimatis vocibus:

Bene è il

non causato, l'histrio aeternalis, da Eleusi,
ma causante memoria pluviale giudicata
a convegno, a scomparti, a ritrovi, a segreti menischi
rotanti, giuturna giovenca giovenile
da celebrare come corpus simulans atqui dissimulans:
denti sangue frusta fianchi
i lampaneggi delle arcaiche cinerule aggressioni,
libellule fastose, grovigli scosciati, sgrovigli, e smerigli
di glottidi ammainate, mai nate,
in infinite ugule pendule nodule,
dove cuce e ricuce l'Ideogramma d'Allarme,
Diletto della Grazia Erratica in pendii di effigie,
dell'Invocazione a Delta del trans-
alimento impeccabile, sutura più negra
della Prossimità/Corporeità illividita innumerabile
in formula di mistero di Cerimonia parthenia,
da Eleusi, spiga parthenogenica, proprio detto
Ear Reclining, in una
parola sola solitaria unica
non conoscibile, suffragata a tutela

et in edia
mangiando insieme e non mangiando mai

et alors
les sources les sœurs chatouillées
inaugure entame et engouffre l'incandescence du Serpent
maladroit d'Inouï

et dans tout ça, la Forte Flamme,
ça tout fort la lui même lui dit qui dégringole
le tout lui même qui bouleverse l'obscurur
d' son Â me même qui s'aime
qui sème ce qui s'aime, son Â me d'indifference
ou bien de délivrance, son épopée chanchate, épaisse,
plus rare son Â me poussée de périr
épousée, son époupée de la vestition,
son Â me car mêle tout
qu'est ce que ai-je connu de la première Brume,
toute mêlée incisive dans le tout
recourbe vocalisé, dans son os, dans le son
de son Â me inclinée sans destin,
son Â me léchée son Use démie et cou ronnée
démystifiée, hâtive Â me
dans le Trou de son Trou exorcisé
serré de près le chemin vain de ses pièges durables –
in pegno e offerta attraverso la
photosensitivity
attraverso zoom-zoom, tra nebule
di sequenze conseguenze cardiache

e glicini di mots mortali, misconosciuti dunque,
tra briname sbriname e fading,
tra house-bush e frammenti selenici,
e brani brandelli scaglie di carotidi a perdere...
et sources anciennes ébouriflées, et après
tranchée hachée découpée la vert e(m)brale avilie
simple où terrible, variation et Fugue défaillance, évanouissance
come dire, o da dire, del vedodire in obolo,
'Dioscure en hypogée véritable' :
sur l'inelucté vide symétrique, crise à défendre :
perpetuated Body in B and C
in or in Indemostrable Drudgery,
in Passing Over,
in the unawoked Vareity
in the unrevealed Involucrum!

Pour ainsi dire, sur le bord du désert qui avance ou s'éparpille :

j'irais chercher le trou où me coucher
avec le Grand Chien Tétracéphale
en fait de Mémoire phonétisée sur face,
sur sa Front l'Ange Acteur de l'Action d'Âge supérieure, nimbe
monté sur Eter Nuement en gloses périmées,
en fait de l'Agacement Ultérieur, Utérie,
utérus dédale méandre aux feux-croisés
mot sur mot de l'idée du Destin Histrionné Immanent

à l'A bri de l'Egide tachetée,
par A gonie d'A go ni sante,
nous irons, en jouet et en masque exténuant,
nous irons flairer plonger partager étendre
sa voix Charmehêlée, soumise
où gît la machine grotesque fardée
des mots qui égarent même les yeux
des Climats Improbables, dont retombent
 les ailes de l'égarement ténébreux,
et tu iras crier par hymène vocal
jusqu'à ce que ton époux apparaîtra ;
ou lorsque C.B. ira se réciter
en l'étranglé pour l'être anglé Trout
en se refuser au Salut à l'Â me, à l'A nonyme
 everything boils
 down everything
 irreversibly
 boils down
to everything outline sets
 everything in stark
 radical nuances
enfant que je, Carmel le Bien, j'irais dire :
oh mes Mots troués par ma voix, brûles
dans la baie de mon cœur
 est-ce que vous en savez quelque chose
 d'une Resurrection sans fin ?

Litany for Carmelo Bene^{1*}

les colombemots ont toutes troujour un ciel à éventrer
pour en abattre la mémoire sur le miroir des instants sonores

les lé
ta nie à lécher
en dérogoir
pour
carmelo bene à
redomander érection
rédemption et
vigueur de
vous voix voir de toi
qui nous, les tous, oblige et nous opte

Héron iridescent aux éclats vert-noir
en éclat verbevoir des glandes sans limite
tu aura bien pu saisir entre tes crocs
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du Temps-Dieu de Blessure, Tant d'Yeux
en trace des Golfes d'Ombre, et l'Ombre
qui beugle, du Tout d'Yeux,
le long les Feuillages sans racines
liées aux rêves des vivants –
et pu trouer pu crever le Collapse
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en jeu d'échéances et regret
les mots en chagrins poinçon
les maux en échanges chas grins
les maux hêlés par A bol
en jeu d'essence
je d'incences, insens jeu d'inceste des croyances détériorées
bien bénéfique bien née parabole
folle voix écrite martyrisée sur l'écran
rompu de terre rie eau rhée à passerelle

mon ami aimé, le Grand aimé, des tempêtes !
qu'est-ce que c'est qui te libère ?
qu'est-ce que c'est qui te possède ?
les mots hululés en vacarmes
en jeux sulfurisés de charmes
en jeux supplique supplice d'élan
pour A A et ripaille donc, pu ta haine
pour C B et engendre donc
pour B C et vieille donc

in ritual of genuflections of mirabunda
 blindness, mirabilis Unda, when it rises,
 the vain vulva of the labial eidolon,
 like a beautiful Prey and breathable
 equilateral veil, voucher of lowlife lexicons
 thick thick as the three hundred walls of cynara solymus
 and venerating *the Queen of the incarnadine*
Death, incarnadine Death of Star,
 she herself, the same, and together
 sa ma ri t'haine, jaspure de haleine
 euchariste, mari tène, samaritaine, gouffre diadème
 s'amar item, triage de ténia, elle même
 la Voix, elle là, elle mène
 en érème en hérésie en herbe autres,
 elle même, seu ipsa ipsaque salus
 animae animatae salus eremi
 jardin du délire autre du repas du trépas
 illa ipsaque Comestibilitas Undae
 illa Grandis imaginum Unda voculata,
 vox *hi hi*, vox *hi fi*, vox hieroglypha
 vox labilis, vox lubricitatis, vox labyrinthica

la Houle toute Houhoule des Images Emues qui errent
 Images Absoutes à l'Assaut des Spécifs,
 à l'arrache de l'Araignée des Pierres
 soul of Absolute voice to the labia³
reclining Ear ad burned Amygdale
 A Myg Dal
 et munda Mundi A nimula
 et blanda Fax Faciebus (Di)vitiata,
 numina mun dii mund is
 h.e. omnia munda mundis undis
 l'au-delà de tout Mi(ni)stère obrué
 min ystère mystère Félé miroir-mésentère,
 du aux yeux-grains secoués par la Larve
 intrasmissible enfin, in pilicula Salomé,
 et la non occultable Auditio
 auditionem audientes audibitis
 par trombes et tuyaux murènes
 ganglions et vives salives
 angles et tue-yeux, tuyaux,
 tout je nous en tout genoux

en gambade et akrobatie vives reculées
 en paraphonésis autour des épaules nues
 noue-ramures nues-blessures

de chaleurs silumées ouvertes, nu feu du feu
incessant
pour l'Antagoniste résumé imperturbable
véritable A (e)ndrogyne jouant
carmélange mélange en voix et lait
pour les treize répertoires de l'éclairage enseveli
great tempestuous Act
more magnificent Actor
or Histrio or *Clown* or great millenary
Shaman, intact Shaman of the Eon
for whom I pull from my hymnology:
Vocis Voce Iridescens Ridens vix
Inve in ictu vocis
terascens Optuma Librata!
summe ergo Histrio culmine Arbor
rubescens vigeas Haruspex
et Fulguriator Carmen τοῦ Ἐλ
Carminator, genialiter ultima Umbrae
genio vocis vox Uta maxima Mundi,
flatus Mundi and I no longer know what or what

voice suits the immature, Demetriad mane
of your voice.
Bene! good! Bene dicas illud Benebene
in venis ultimis, in vanis ultimis, in ultimatis vocibus:
Bene is the
un-caused, l'histrio aeternalis, as in Eluesis,
yet causing pluvial memory judged
in conference, in sections, in meetings, in secret rotating
menisci, juvenile heifer juturna
to celebrate like corpus simulans atqui dissimulans:
teeth blood whip hips
the moonlight of archaic cinderulean⁴ aggressions,
sumptuous dragonflies, scanty clad knots, unknottings, and emery
of lowered glottises, never born,⁵
in infinite ugule pendule nodule,
where the Ideogram of Alarm sews and re-sews,
delightful of the Erratic Grace in decline of effigies,
of the Invocation in Delta of the impeccable
trans-nourishment, blacker suture
of the innumerable leaden Proximity/Corporeity
in formula of mystery of parthenian Ceremony,
as in Eluesis, parthenogenic ear, precisely called
Ear reclining, in a
single solitary unique word
unknowable, backed by the protection

of not knowing, of not dwelling, of dis-appearing
in moonlight and sunken vault vaulted vaulting
that radiates, ray-diates, it opens in bursts,
the inaccessible flux of errors
in sweet sweet disorganized
Ypokalipsis precisely of the raw Womb
in the free soaring enemy Discourse
in the pure sense of icy alliteration,
of friction, of the complete daze
of the Precious Orga(ni)sm of yes,
of the Simulacrum in Monstrance of Breath and Trace
in ictus of fantastic Cells
that dare weep upon the Sickly Waters
 of the summoning shade,
in the threatening veiled air from the phonocryptic
turbine, of the far off eve ntuality,
 la Rêve-Elation Celtique,
like a passing tax of tenderness and Zoocentric,
 pity,
banner of rapid crossing
 Eros and Deception
 Ejection en Courbe d'Accent
du Bout qui rejette son sommet dans le Gouffre

 l'Epi de Voix en ce qu'elle souffre
 the Ear of voice in Eleusis
extremely nourished nourishing that nourishes, en outre
the Horse pregnant with the most varied lights,
that spills in hues, proud, ferocious broken
line, riotous materies, matrice à foutre, arch,
(un)curdled sexual cupola, vocalized wasps
I fumble (or you fumble) the protein reasons
of the wind simulating fiery litanies,
hair-brained, bored, broods of bands
for eating the long chain of the impossible syllable
à foutre the corpus Hermiticum, l'esseculum,
on cliffs of erectile glimmers and crown,
golden right, gloomy, febricital⁶ temple,
scoffed detention of corporeal comedy,
from whose foramen it slides, hisses
and flees the amazing miraculous
 Corporeity of Actor, of hungry
 Histrio, as I saw saw saw and saw again
 et inquam
 sic est com edia
 et in edia

eating together and never eating

et alors

les sources les sœurs chatouillées
inaugure entame et engouffre l'incandescence du Serpent
maladroit d'Inouï

et dans tout ça, la Forte Flamme,
ça tout fort la lui même lui dit qui dégringole
le tout lui même qui bouleverse l'obscurur
d' son Â me même qui s'aime
qui sème ce qui s'aime, son Â me d'indifference
ou bien de délivrance, son épopée chanchate, épaisse,
plus rare son Â me poussée de périr
épousée, son époupée de la vestition,
son Â me car mêle tout
qu'est ce que ai-je connu de la première Brume,
toute mêlée incisive dans le tout
recourbe vocalisé, dans son os, dans le son
de son Â me inclinée sans destin,
son Â me léchée son Use démie et cou ronnée
démystifiée, hâtive Â me
dans le Trou de son Trou exorcisé
serré de près le chemin vain de ses pièges durables –
pledged and offered through

photosensitivity

through *zoom-zoom*, between nebulae
of sequences cardiac consequences

and wisteria of mortal mots, and thus misunderstood,
between frost, thaw, and *fading*,
between *bush-house* and selenic fragments,
and shreds tatters flakes of carotids to be shed...
et sources anciennes ébouriflées, et après
tranchée hachée découpée la vert e(m)brale avilie
simple où terrible, variation et Fugue défaillance, évanouissance
like saying, or to be said, of the seesaying⁷ in offering,
'Dioscoure en hypogée véritable' :
sur l'inelucté vide symétrique, crise à défendre :
perpetuated Body in B and C
in or in Indemostrable Drudgery,
in Passing Over,
in the unawoked Vareity
in the unrevealed Involucrum!

Pour ainsi dire, sur le bord du désert qui avance ou s'éparpille :
j'irais chercher le trou où me coucher

avec le Grand Chien Tétracéphale
 en fait de Mémoire phonétisée sur face,
 sur sa Front l'Ange Acteur de l'Action d'Âge supérieure, nimbe
 monté sur Eter Nuement en gloses périmées,
 en fait de l'Agacement Ultérieur, Utérie,
 utérus dédale méandre aux feux-croisés
 mot sur mot de l'idée du Destin Histrionné Immanent

à l'A bri de l'Egide tachetée,
 par A gonie d'A go ni sante,
 nous irons, en jouet et en masque exténuant,
 nous irons flairer plonger partager étendre
 sa voix Charmehêlée, soumise
 où gît la machine grotesque fardée
 des mots qui égarent même les yeux
 des Climats Improbables, dont retombent
 les ailes de l'égarement ténébreux,
 et tu iras crier par hymène vocal
 jusqu'à ce que ton époux apparaîtra ;
 ou lorsque C.B. ira se réciter
 en l'êtranglé pour l'être anglé Trout
 en se refuser au Salut à l'Â me, à l'A nonyme

*everything boils
 down everything
 irreversibly*

*boils down
 to everything outline sets
 everything in stark
 radical nuances*

enfant que je, Carmel le Bien, j'irais dire :
 oh mes Mots troués par ma voix, brûlés
 dans la baie de mon cœur
 est-ce que vous en savez quelque chose
 d'une Resurrection sans fin ?

¹ Carmelo Bene (1937-2002) was an Italian playwright, actor and poet. He was known for his many innovations in the field of theater, his incredible stage presence, and his extraordinary ability to declaim poetry, not only his own, but also that of major Italian poets such as Dante Alighieri, Giacomo Leopardi, and Dino Campana. In many ways, he was very similar to Villa: both were as erudite as they were ill-tempered and wrote poetry in a language all their own, creating macaronic mixtures with a predilection for wordplay. More importantly, they were equally obsessed with the phonetic side of language, of which Villa's homage to Bene serves as a perfect example. Villa never intended to print this litany; it was Bene himself who contacted Aldo Tagliaferri (the custodian of the poet's intellectual property after he suffered a stroke in 1986), and insisted on its publication.

* The italics mark Villa's original English.

² For *eido* see note #16 on page 289. Villa plays on this word in different ways throughout his oeuvre. Here, he is using it in conjunction with the terms "idolatry" and "ideology."

³ In the original, *all'elabia* is most likely an intentional misspelling of "alle labia" (to the labia).

⁴ *Cinerule* is a combination of “cinereo” (ashen, cinderly) and “ceruleo” (cerulean).

⁵ In Italian the adjective “ammainate” (to haul down or lower) contains the morphemes “mai nate” (never born).

⁶ The meaning of *febricitale* is unclear, but probably has something to do with a “febbre” (fever).

⁷ With *vedodire* Villa combines the first person singular form of the verb “vedere” (to see) and the infinitive form of “dire” (to say).

Poesia è

poesia è evanescenza

poesia è condanna a vita, con libertà
sulla parola, liberté sur parole

poesia è guida cieca a un antico
enigma, a un segreto inaccessibile

poesia è trattazione dinamica e sussultoria

poesia è la più scampagnata cosmologia che noi possiamo
inalberare e agitare,
è una piccola (abregée) cosmogonia inconsapevole e
inconsutile, scucita,
strafelata, sdrucita

poesia è dimenticare
dimenticanza

poesia è se-parare sé dal sé

poesia è ciò che si lascia assolutamente fuori

poesia è svuotamento senza esaurimento

poesia è costrizione al remoto,
al non ancora, al non
adesso, al non-qui,
al non-là, al
non-prima né non-dopo
né non-adesso

poesia è sfondamento

poesia è bruciare – partorire nello stesso gesto vocale

poesia è l'esserci moltiplicato per
non esserci, ricordare
di transesserci di traverso
a spartiacque

poesia è misconoscimento di
non so bene che cosa,
ma misconoscimento

poesia è impotenza infinita,
limpida, lucida, allucinata,

poesia è intersezione
interiezione
intersessione
interruzione

poesia è una carognata

poesia è transito e esito

poesia è infusione e trans-fusione

poesia è memoria di ciò che non è
e che deve non-essere, cioè
è il Sé culminante, liminare
il Sé come cosmo incompiuto e
da non compiere mai

poesia è legare – slegare

poesia è la scena rituale della
infinita incertezza, della
inaccessibile Infermità
(Infirmity)

poesia è scorcio
scarto
strombo
sterro

poesia è culla – cuna
è cella – cruna
del Trans – Organo
del transorganico
dell'Indistinto
dell'In(de)terminato

poesia è la cenere

poesia è diagonale
è vanvera
dentro il corpo manifesto
dell'Inesistente Universale

dell'Anenergico Globale

poesia è pigrizia irrigidita, con
un braccio appesa al ramo
dell'Albero della Scienza del
Bene e del Male; cioè
è una Scimmia che sta in
Brasile sempre appesa con un
braccio al ramo di un albero (è la Preguiça)

poesia è terrorismo nel dominio della lingua,
è scoppio nella clausura del linguaggio

è terrore sul fondo delle retoriche

poesia è liberazione dalla conoscenza,
fuga dal conosciuto
svincolo dalla meccanica

è insieme è caduta, sprofondo, nella
meccanica ripetitiva, ossessiva,
iterativa, che è anche la
meccanica del cenno, della
norma, del rito (dell'obbligo
stretto, della rima, del numero,
dell'essenza)

poesia è implosione del tempo – zero
e di grado in(de)finito

poesia è sfrenamento, sfaso, minaccia potenziale,
spacco, rapina, distruzione

poesia è scasso, squarcio, scuotimento

è l'urto tra forza
e misura che
tende a cancellare.
siamo proprio
infinitamente matti

la poesia è quasi tutto: cioè è tutto, meno
quello che veramente è

poesia è impermanenza incrociata con
trans-manenza

è impertinenza

poesia è scontro e incontro (spontaneo e
destinato) tra nevrosi e inconscio,
tra archetipo e Sé
anello monotono e perpetuo tra impulso
e ossessione

poesia è aggressione

poesia è fare spiragli, produrre crepe,
segnare fessure dentro il
sipario, dentro la Parete Sbarrata

poesia è lotta contro la notte
poesia è notte contro la notte

poesia è urto contro la voce
poesia è attrito con la pelle del Drago

poesia è così
è così e così
e così sia

***Poetry is*¹**

poetry is evanescence

poetry is life penalty, release
on one's word, *liberté sur parole*

poetry is a blind guide to an ancient
enigma, to an inaccessible
secret

poetry is an argument
dynamic and jarring

poetry is a rag tag cos-
mology we can
raise and wave,
it's a small (*abregée*) cos-
mogony: unaware,
seamless, unstitched,
breathless, in tatters

poetry is to forget
forgetfulness

poetry is to separate self from
self

poetry is what's completely
left out

poetry is emptying without
exhausting

poetry is constraint to the remote,
to the not yet, the not
now, the not here,
the not there, the
not before, neither not after,
nor not now

poetry is breeching

poetry is to burn and give birth
in the same vocal gesture

poetry is being-there multiplied
by not being-there, remembering
to trans-be-there traversely
like a watershed

poetry is a misunderstanding about
what I don't know exactly,
but a misunderstanding

poetry is infinite impotence,
limpid, lucid, hallucinated

poetry is intersection
interjection
intersession
interruption

poetry is a low blow

poetry is transit and exit

poetry is infusion and trans-fusion

poetry is memory of what is not
and what must not be; that is
the culminating, liminal Self
the Self as an incomplete cosmos
never to be completed

poetry is tying – untying

poetry is the ritual scene of
infinite uncertainty, of the
inaccessible Infermity
(*Infirmity*)

poetry is a streak
a swerve
a splay
a spade

poetry is crib – cradle
it's crab – ladle²
of the Trans-Organ
of the trans-organic
of the Indistinct
of the In(de)terminable

poetry is ash

poetry is diagonal
it's ramble
inside the manifest body
of Universal Inexistence
of Global Entropy

poetry is stiffened laziness
an arm hanging from the
branch of the Tree of the Knowledge
of Good and Evil; that is
a Monkey in Brazil
always hanging by an arm
from the branch of a tree (it's the *Preguiça*³)

poetry is terrorism in the domain of speech,
a bang in the cloister of language

it's terror in the depths of rhetoric

poetry is liberation from knowing
escape from the known
a release from mechanics

and at the same time it's falling, sinking
into repetitive, obsessive, iterative
mechanics, which are also the
mechanics of hinting, of the
norm, of the ritual (of strict
obligation, of rhyme, of number,
of essence)

poetry is the implosion of zero time
and in(de)finite degree

poetry is unleashing, un-phrasing, a potential
threat, breaking, robbing,
destruction

poetry is smashing, shattering, shaking

*it's a clash between
strength and restraint
that tends to erase.
We are truly
infinitely mad*

poetry is almost everything: that is everything, less
what it really is

poetry is impermanence crossed with
trans-manence

it's impertinence

poetry is counter and encounter (spontaneous
and predestined) between neurosis and unconscious,
between archetype and Self

a monotonous and perpetuated ring between
impulse and obsession

poetry is aggression

to write poetry is to cut slits, produce cracks,

point out filaments in the
curtain, in the Barred
Wall

poetry is a fight against the night

poetry is night against the night

poetry is a rub against the voice

poetry is friction against the Dragon's skin

poetry is this
it's this and that
and so be it

¹ For years this poem was left in a box at one of Villa's neighbors in Rieti. It was found and subsequently published by Toni Maraini in the January 2002 issue of the Italian literary journal "Quaderni." The original manuscript is comprised of 9 folios without numbering. Here Villa acts as an ancient sibyl, tearing his work to pieces and inviting the reader to reshuffle the individual stanzas as they see fit.

² In the original Italian, this verse literally reads: *it's cell – eye of the needle*. Villa was clearly thinking about the passage from the New Testament "It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Matthew 19: 23-24)

³ *Perguiça* literally means "sloth" in Portuguese. Here Villa uses it in reference to the mammal that dwells in the trees of South America, specifically those of Brazil, where Villa lived for about a year (1951-1952).

Prima o poi

Prima o poi, poi o prima
le parole dette, le parole scritte,
presto o tardi tutte le parole
sono destinate a sparire
spariscono.

Le parole sulla carta, le parole
sulle pietre, le parole sui rami
spariranno tutte.

Se queste parole e non parole
sono scritte su materie
che presto si decompongono, che
durano poco più di un
attimo o poco più di un millennio
che cosa esse sono.

Sooner or Later

Sooner or later, later or sooner
words spoken, words written,
sometime or another all words
are destined to vanish
they vanish.

Words on paper, words
on stone, words on branches
will all disappear.

If these words and non words
are written on materials
that quickly decompose, that
last little more than a
second or little more than a millennium
what are they.¹

¹ This last stanza would require a question mark, but actually ends in a period.

Sampling of Things to Come

LUCIO FONTANA

emitte spiritum tuum
et foramina creabuntur

.....
mitte digitum tuum
in foraminibus

LA GNOSE ÉVULGWÉE DU TROU

(pour la bien bonne coagulation cinétique des trous
troués dans le

TROU

boutrou foutrou toutrou troutrou d'où guette fau-
trou troufau trouflou troufelle)

alvéole con p act!
alguev éole cinétique?

tu cris tu foutes, re-, tu vrilles, tu noues les trous en
courbes en chaînes trou après trou urgent en droit
en dextruation en orientaction en parcours en chymi-
smères obligées en corps morts en lèvres hiberniées
en cataclyses en hypolyses en barbises en instants
d'instants en millénaires en trou temps

nuoer

lier

commencer

précipiter

(oui, j'ai oui centaines de minutes immenses dans cet-
te installation plissée constellée pissée)

entretemps le temps qui tourne autour d'un trou, qui
trourne autour d'un tout, ou le temps qui tourne au
trou? par le trou

et qu'est-ce que c'est là la connaissance-nais-
sancenée sans sinus que de faire ou faire faire un trou
sans un trou sans fini, sans finir sans? à l'in? fini ?

(du temps de l'entre-*n*-sexes) le trou secoué et le trou
caché qui se hiérarchisent en alterance, étendre-étien-
dre-entendre, phalange de trous, y descendre pour les
changer e, en Processus de Monades, une Aventure
dénutritionnelle, (on y pourrait bien têter-tâter, de ses
lèvres des ses yeux: est-ce qu'ils mènent à une Sour-
ce? une bordée?

à una Sourche, à une Proie? à une Plessure irrélate?)
oarce que le Trou est d'emblée coupé, si l'on va essa-
yer de souffler d'essuyer dans le Trou, d'essouffler la
substance du Trou, ou, où, et
alors le soustrait, -at, bien, le sous-trou, le soustrué,
le trou dans le miroir, le trou dans le paradigme
hypergéomantisé, le trou au dedans du trou, au très-
fond, et c'est là tout, bien tout, bientôt très tout, tes
trous (trou pourrait être: "tu es," ou bien "tuer")
chez trou, des trous observés, des trous occultes, des
trous pénétrants, des trous filtrés, des trous intercom-
pénétrés pour des trous associés, en trou, le trouviol,
le trouvol, le trouville, le trouve est, le trouver, letr
où, ou bien, oùniversal, où ni vers sel, trous aillent,
des trous dormis des trous prétermis, ou mis dans le
trop dan le, l'œil, troeil, où trou aussitôt rentré, vain-
cul, également trou écrasé, massacré, tout, trou-kra-
sis, trou crêtes

mais un

un

1

un

seul

un

soeil

un

tout

un

trou

trou tué pour tuer, bien, (tuer la mort),
là un trou mort, comme si ça c'était drou (...où?), de-
du d'être où le trou se troue, c'était ça serait très
simple que l'être-trou trou outre trou, les uns com-
me des autres ou comme les autre trous, tous trous,
et de nous tirer de là, par là, par où, et alors

ayant étée achevée une ruche, là, enfin, le vi-
de serait-ce un trou à réinventer, une sommatoire-
truche-ruche de trous, ou le

TROUZÉRO

à computer à compter à conter, trou de véhémence et
trou de paix, trou de trop de vie ou de trop de trop
ou de trop de mort, mais en chaque trou le grand cas
du trou, voilà, si ça c'est bien de la revanche concla-
mée pour y tout app(r)endre et tout y tra(n)cher, viol
derrière, viol en avant, tout trou qui pousse et tom-
be trou en trombe trou en trombe trou, ça c'est, trou

au buse, trou obus, trou au baise, là, les trous l'un en face de l'autre c'est bien trou en troutrou, ou en trou tout, un, tout simple, jusqu'au niveau de l'unité disparaissant son les coup-trous de l'unité, touche jusqu'au touche d'un touche un, 1

jusqu'au trou l'artrouche l'artre s'éteient au fond du tout petit trou entronnoir, trou hospital, trou véhédémentiel, trou véhi cul, il faudrait que toute l'humanité demeurait sauvée dans les trous, un trou sur chaque trou, lavie au trou! à travers du trou, le trou volitif et le trou volontaire, trou volatile trou brut, à se trouer soi-même sur peau sur trou sur crâne sur couille sur troudre, sur lèvres par exemple du tatrouage technique, la troucarie ou la trougamie, la trougénie ou la troumatique, ou trouthérie, le trou sur gênoù, tu peux bien y aller au fond de toute ta force, là, le trou t'attend, marche donc et frappe, et réveille-moi de tout trou de sommeil conjugué (con-gigné)

conjugué sur espace-crépi: (je crois que cette crépissure où le trou s'enfoncé, soit le drapeau inépuisable de notre impuissance fulgurée frappée poignardée): hissez le drapeau-fontaine, blanc rouge vert noir, le tableau enduit! tabula vexatoria, tabula castrationis, vexillum castrationis je vais le nommer: (halètement explicite)

sur l'espace progressivement dézérofié se noyent un troutéris de difficultés psychométriques, éoïdées en tortures bavardes, le troutéris du grand préexil, et c'est là ce qu'il fait, ce qu'il faut fêter (foeter fouetter fêter fouttre), qu'il faut écreuser (trou touché trouchés pas des trous, des petits slogans "groupe," en corymbes sans sources, les sources conglobées dans le nul originaire, les sources toujours hésitées), ça croche les trous jusqu'à en consumer la trouité (l'étruité, l'autruité, l'autrouité) fluide, jusqu'au bout du, le trouarbres (pyramide humaine renversée, renc une renversion), le trou qui va mûrir sur les dos de l'*aïón*, lisez-là, troyons, la grande truie: le troutroué et les trous détroits et la trouité cachée, imminente, très chaste, chahaha (trous!)! le trou très troué dans l'extensibilité odostatique, de la pudrespace (poudrespèce) délicate s'échappant à la cohésion, l'extensibilité sécrétionnaire, pénitentielle (le trouévage d'autrui, le trouavage de soi en soi-même) et bien ça sera, dans le cercle, l'armée des cieus (les kosmos

des cyeux, trônes et dominations, crocs et aiguillons, pustules divines croûtes démiurges), errant et nombrée (cieux mâchés de toiles) en troubillon pyrrhique, iambe io io io, le trouïo, io, splendeur assassine, nappes et tympan in cymbalis mutis, brusquement dévisionnée, claque en coulée zodiac, bondissant, aliments maintenant, bateau cosmique en route expétitive brandillant, vers une série très simple des yeux trouant du

COMMENCEMENT

(aventure (avant lumière) (sur les lèvres du poète) plurivalve ambiguë, anneau sans soudure, subtil ovule trempé de, énumérable, hors d'équilivre, famille éveillée du bruit, en pousse scrutable de pâleur sur la zone déserte, flèche spirituisée du Moment; j'irai y me plonger, moi qui j'ai prêché jadis le droit du trou de faire trou, le droit de faire trou, partout pythagorisme très contrit, très au jeu, drôlerie pythienne, avec coaction conviction contorsion antipirinisme: jadis, en effet, à l'aide des instruments de mon ami sculpteur, Amerigo Tot, j'ai percé les pierres petites, et, tout seul, j'ai trépané des tomates (oh, les armées des cieux, les troupes laides, oui, les troubles haies, les trou-plaies, plaies vides!) (ugelli, microbonds, zones minimales de diffusion de l'homogène inopiné) (étrangement suspendues) (les zones) (légères et luisant)

pour le TROÛ scindé de sa source et, au contraire, intégré à sa gnose, le trou dénudé qui te ti tu be, to be, le trou inintrouilligible et introué de l'EXCÈS, troufugue troufuite, tout une chevelure de trous Flous, trône de trous nus (donk) un trou deux trous trois trous (le trou: bon, un œil un ciel une âme une fente une idée un sphynxtère qui aurait bien pu avorter, trouavorton, et qui pourraient se traire, se taire tous les instants en face de leur trou), c.à.d.: le trou de la Restitution létargique,

le Trou dénié au défi par son trou et par le trout: et tout ce qui fait partie du trou, et le trou de la Pudeur Asphyxiante; en total, le trou mort qui est le porteur escatologisé des trous, et ses Ailes Jalouses (parce que c'est justement là, entre trou et trou autre, que le nonspace célèbre ses noces immenses, ontojenétiques, onophrènes, comme renverser, un trou c'est renverser un utérus, renverser dedansdehors une costellation, renverser un amour, renver-

ser un ouragan, un épisode sacrement syndacal du Coïtus Général, le présouffle de la Halte, le calix des ressacs des trous, le trou est trou est tout est trou, en principe était le trou, et oublierai-je moi toute une semaine-semence de siècle qui fut remplie de trous véritables sensibles générables, chaque trou une année ou un millénaire, hou! queffuos à être! comme s'ils eussent été le christ d'un trou, un christrou, c.à. d. un fétiche pelingénète construit par des virus-miroirs rénitents, reniflents, et alors trouer le fétiche Espace, comme piocher dans l'eau échoustique (euristique): les trous mouroissent l'éclat et ses chances, l'archipel (la sombre-nature, à l'intérieur ultime du vide, suspend toute fluidité, toute katalyse, tout contact avec l'acceptation totale, et le peintre dès alors paraît plus qu'un signataire futile) (quand même, en particulier, sous certaines propositions de vue (de vie) il faut bien reconnaître que les positions (dépositions, dispositions) soutenues par le peintre se présentent très pauvres d'entrain et fort dépourvues d'alimentation montante: sa phraséologie, qui ne connaît que l'algèbre euclidéenne (des orties spaciales), bouge sans vibrations et capture aobliquement, avec une spontanéité heureusement à peu près idiote (ça veut dire que Fontana est et en même temps n'est pas démoniaque, vêtu de mana; selon les attitudes et les moments des trous; parce que j'ai inventé le type émergeantiel du *pyschodaimon*, trouer-performance, eh bien, ces psuedo-peintres qui trouent et qui coupent, on peut bien les nommer *pyschodaimones*) (parfaitement provisoires, joués par outrance hermet-)

alors on pourra taper des doigts vraiment autant liquides à ses trous, tu vois, tout debout immobile, sur la même journée par où se dénouera l'égarément long (perpetuellement retrourné), la journée sans nos aisselles, la journée avec nous, toujours sur la même place, sur la même souche, sucée par quelque trou et remonter, en menant la danse, en trésaillant, jusqu'aux galaxies oisives de l'idée du trou: et en effet,

comment serait-ce partagé de cours du monde?

en trous-haleines

en trous-athlètes

en préfixes-couloir

en puits- αἴών plus faiblement que dans la lumière

enclitique, plus ardemment que dans le corps ob-
scène d'un flûte suave, que dans le gorge nymphale
nymphé (à éteindre le courant d'être finie, à l'étrein-
dre d'être qu'il soit *éranos* empreint sur nuages,
si les fleurs s'allongent et s'élargissent, et s'étendent
à la recherche du lieu par où sortir puissamment, avec
ardeur orndulation, des bornes bornes lénitives, bor-
nes-flèches, bornes brogues, chances et niveaux mira-
culants des élevages anciens, néolithiques (nouveau à
perdre les rumeurs les exhalations rameurs re âmeurs
noires in vacuum, encore entrer trou le veines des
balances qui vont se déchirer, sous la pousse du triom-
phe de l'inéquation, et, oh là, sa main qui sort immag-
ginée salsifiée enduite, soulevée du centre au pe-
rimètres conçus creux, con sucreux, écrits, soufflés
sifflements, les branches autres effacées, lancée au de-
hors béant, au nouveau béant, au, donc, au, eau, au
trouveau béant obligé, cru, accent, occident, tuyau,
nuque, boyau, trabéation, entrecroisée minimale d'é-
nergies irrépéribles, et poutre foulée, là, foyer incon-
nu du caché, trou tout nu, là, j'en devine le nombre
saccadé rompu lu le sang disparu, le désang haut seu-
lement, l'ennui qui rentre aux hauts, et roule et s'é-
coule s'égrrhoule elle même en pointe de pénis in-
terférant, en lames vites, en fonds, le geste y s'étouffe
et retourne à l'autre du delà d'autre soi-même, qui
touche et qui hôte et tranche le souffle et perce le
siffle, pourtant, en lumière longue jusqu'au, le fond
des utérus volumes changés en, le doigt pénétrant,
en y remontant, entrechengés

enchevêtrés être et

ce passage mu de tout ce qui va te touer turer le
tout trou fou toi tué tu en trou
parce que çacela le trou que tu trou ve, où ve, le
trou distance, une vibration stupide entre l'ordonée
cohordonnée biorragique, stupide glu gluant et
une axisse phrenorragique
et en première ligne (tourne le trou
le trou du trou et tu trouvera
l'ultime le dernier le trou l'autroui
the thru to 300 yds, from here, de l'autre trou
le troujour ingénéré mais que où i
aurais-je fait le trou dans le speculum absent, le mi-
roir opaque amer diagonal la trourriture, nous
riture, nourriture le trou manger le trou dont le
cul est cul de vipère (à changer le rideau! change

donc, si ça va) (et tous les trous récents et passés,
à restituer!) (tout trop jeune toutefois j'en suis cre-
vé) (je pouvais en cracher au loin du loin un trou de
trou) un trou d'eau, trou dans l'eau, dans l'o, dans le
sang, sangtrou, et pourtant le trouçanle troulà où,
et, par exemple,
le trou-mot
en tant que mot nul
au point de fibre

j'ai eu déjà, lorsque j'étais tout petit, et
je touchais de mes doigts les abîmes auditifs, envie
de capturer les trous pour les déposer dans le trou
du trou, ou dans le niche de la du tout, jusque dans
les trou de dieu et de la madonne (inventés! bon, ils
se sont inventés! par eux-mêmes les trous) (et juste-
ment, mesure après mesure, les doigts perforant trem-
blent de trou en trou sur la chair du trou (pour
arracher doigtement l'araignée de son trou, son re-
gard infiltré comme un rayon épée jusqu'à l'entrée
du trou) (là où l'on sort) (en autre et en anxiété)

et bien donc, trou à trou quand j'ai trou à
coup de trou où, trou qui m'étrou, aurais-je trou sec,
trou émerclé mètre par des tr(ou)aces de courage
montre où, toutre où et mon ton, toùn tout trou,
par où l'accès est passé vers l'obscur découpé (and
complexities of Survival, à manger les trous) (les
ulcères foutue!)

l'es-tension des mots dels des mots dules des mains
sions des frac tions des spermutations apparait quel-
que pue close et branlée en mesure, drainée avec
une furie évidemment, par trop, psychogymnique
quelque peu débouchant, trébouchant, enchantée
mais inerte d'inertie anoressique: comme si ça c'é-
tait une manœuvre anchylosée, non transitive, sur
des intervalles engourdis, rigides entravés embarrassés
riades en trismes orbitales bien peu sûres, un proces-
sus lenticulaire pas trop frélatant, glandules et se-
mences de la perforation myriade, plus d'odoriféra-
tion que de texture oùbieuse, plus d'oùrdissage-
déchirure que de fertilité originaire, que d'entraîne-
ment, plus de trames que de toxines, plus de signes
que de blessures, sur le trou au long, toujours unila-
bié: peut-être est-il que le champ (campus qu'on pour-
rait susciter, en conglobant dans un système ou dans
plusieurs systèmes le Trouage entier que constitue
l'œuvre de Fontana), obtiendrait une machine trou-

ant d'une envergure permutationnelle à la puissance haute, en tout cas variée et instituant des principes actifs dans le sphère infinie de l'Isomorphie Générale ou des Emotions Majeures ou de l'Attente Latente. En quelque sens, toutefois, demeure légèrement mémorable la passion, et l'intuition peut-être, de la manœuvre à exercer sur le Trou Créatif. Et les Ensembles des Trous Créatifs reçoivent dans leur sein la douleurs des Nombres, et ils la remouent, aussi bien que toute la richesse et l'anxiété du jeu de la complainte raisonnée des Algèbres ;

bien, l'usage récipient! faire zéro-tactile, tactiliser zérp, fêter zérurgie, présencier zérousie, achever zérogamie! (mais, où se trou-ve-t-elle latra ce du Scandale?)

ayant été étourdie, par réductions accessives, la dureté de la Primauté du Frontal Absolu, l'emploi étymologique du trou [(embrassez-les donc ces trous, baisez-les, en grand, le baiser même, visiteurs!)] (le trou demeure pratiquement libre, et, au contraire, l'homme peintre, hommpreinte, tante d'instituer ou deviner une Nécessité représentative ou autrement)] dans les renseignements des tableaux de Fontana s'obsubette à des règles minimales et dénominatrices, qui détruisent presque entièrement les jeux de causalité dont s'anime et se nourrit chaque position et s'exalte l'Ensemble irroré des positions (Positrions) à repère (repaire; les jeux qui troublent les Gradations de la Montée in prepetuum, qui irritent la différence-différée du trou ultime, le Troutype factorial; qui écrasent l'Obstance de la Positrion Irrélate; qui rongent l'Etat absolu de l'Irrisoire). En effet, la procédure qui rend un ordre prévenu et inamovible à un certain convoi de trous désaltère et remoue l'ambigüité mineure et la Série originelle créative, ouverte aux énumérations-positions les plus dénouées dans tous les cas et dans tous les ordres (orguedres), c'est à dire dans l'ordre (orguedre) multiplié au cisfini de la Dérivé inoppugnable, là où discussion représentation nombrification imagination s'éteignent:

à faire
glisser intact, et inachevé, le sophisme prégnant de l'
ORDRE-DESORDRE
de l'univers, micro- et macroséisme

'Idée spaciale' dit Fontana. Qu'est-ce que ça peut signifier? Je crois que ça veut dire rien, juste-

ment; rien, et, en tout cas, son œuvre ne veut dire que rien; bien; son œuvre, seulement, relate. Plus probable que cette œuvre tend à mettre en évidence en remou in tension ou bien créer et absorber un état de présence: produisant des algies similaires aux algies de la confusion évolutive éternelle aveugle et de la perplexité parfaite, inavouable. Comme il y avait de ceux qui prenait l'élan et trouait une parois, de son propre crâne ou de son propre prépuce; ou contre soi même miroir (speculum), pour y chasser le trou au delà de son petit corps (corpusculum), le rechasser à sa coïncidence stérile. Enfin, nous ne pourrions jamais calculer combien soit près de la déperpétuation et de l'exclatement du Vide, souzerain, la fiction du Trouer de tableaux, ou même le coup du Meurtrier, ou le coup du Prêtre sur la bête sacrificiable, ou le trou dans le cœur de l'arbre, de la terre, du ciel, ou dans la lunule du pain transhistorié, sur les coins de lèvres qui se mâchent: combien donc prolonger l'aleph, aléphiser à coups de bec, à coups d'orteil, à coups de croc les morceaux innombrable du Multiple Nul et l'innombrable Principe, l'Ambience inébranlable, inaltérée, l'impossible Amalgame Unité et sa divisibilité en sous-multiples du Nul, et fermer tout Passage, troupassage.

[1961]

p.s. Une niche niche
dans une niche
c'est une voile née
à chymère obligée:

quelle mère, quelle mer?
le nul dans le nul
c'est une araignée
de la vague polaire:

le cul dans le cul
le trou dans le trol
qu'est-ce que c'est ?
qu'est-ce que je sais?

Noi e la preistoria
*A proposito di una scoperta recente**

Sulle pendici del monte Circeo, l'opera paziente, tenace, quasi da roditore del tempo, condotta dai paleontologi, e specialmente dal prof. Blanc, la terra ha riservato, in questi ultimi mesi, una nuova rivelazione: sono stati scoperti i resti fossili (una mascella inferiore, con alcuni denti) di un bambino, anzi di un piccolo ominide, decenne, della razza Neandertal: vissuto in quella remota parte del Lazio parecchie decine di migliaia d'anni orsono. Gli anni si calcolano sulla radioattività degli isotopi di carbonio, tratti dai residui di carbone che si trovano nei focolari preistorici. E questi ultimi reperti, approssimativamente valutati, andranno negli Stati Uniti, dove si praticano sistemi di calcolo di radioattività molto più vasti di quanto non si possa fare nei nostri istituti scientifici. Ma non sono tanto i tre dentini del bambino che ci interessano qui. Più importante per noi è l'annuncio dato dal Blanc di aver trovato, in una delle grotte esplorate, una vertebra di balena, che i primitivi ominidi di Neandertal hanno, evidentemente, recuperato sul litorale. Ora, si ritiene che gli uomini di Neandertal, cacciatori straordinari, non possedessero nessuna facoltà di quelle che noi oggi chiamano "artistiche": o, almeno, la paleontologia non ne ha trovata le vestigia. Però il prof. Blanc ha rivelato, con l'acutezza che distingue sempre la sua ricerca, questo: il fatto che essi abbiano raccolto e trasportato nella loro abitazione la vertebra, dovrebbe dimostrare che essi comprendevano "la singolarità" dell'oggetto.

Questo è veramente il punto che ci riguarda, e che dovrebbe condurci a una analisi assai più approfondita di quanto fino ad oggi, con una singolare ristrettezza di prospettive, abbiano fatto le estetiche, o, diciamo addirittura, l'estetica, su quelle manifestazioni umane, o anche preumane e paraumane, che in qualche senso coincidono con le facoltà così dette "artistiche". Difatti rimane da chiedersi: cosa mai può aver "visto" l'uomo di Neandertal nella vertebra di una balena, per trascinarla fin dentro casa? sarà soltanto una intuizione di carattere magico-religioso, o, tenuto conto della fondamentale e semplice organicità del pensiero prelogico, del pensiero preistorico, così difficilmente sezionabile in gradi e in elementi, non sarà magica, o intuita come magica proprio l'idea centrale che rappresenta una vertebra? e cioè, la strutturazione, la continuità, la variazione metrica costante, l'iterazione? il sentimento della vertebra, della catena, del serpente, dell'intreccio, non è forse da considerarsi la fondazione prima, e ultima, del sentimento così detto artistico, della intuizione ritmica?

È presumibile, anche se non probabile, che la vertebra portata nella grotta avesse una funzione magica, apotropaica, culturale. Però, quello che con grandi difficoltà i paleontologi e i paleontologi hanno tentato di chiarire, rimane appunto la ragione per cui un oggetto, reperto in seno alla natura o manufatto, sia venuto a caricarsi di un funzionamento che l'oggetto in sé naturalmente non presuppone. Quale il procedimento secondo cui l'oggetto diventa significativo in un ordine apparentemente eterogeneo? che cosa porta a quella successiva natura? che cosa fa emettere all'oggetto rapporti nuovi con sfere di attività esterne ad esso? è un procedimento meccanico o un procedimento psicologico? L'analisi dovrebbe, innanzi tutto, procedere alla classifica e alla qualifica, e a un congruo lavoro comparativo, di tutti gli oggetti conosciuti dalla descrizione scientifica come magici; e quindi chiedersi: perché questi oggetti, questa serie di oggetti, e non un'altra serie? Praticamente: ecco la vertebra di balena. Ecco una forma, ecco una struttura, ecco un aspetto della preda naturale. Non vorremmo nemmeno lontanamente insinuare, come qualche esteta, sempre gretto, o qualche dilettante, spesso improprio, farebbe, che la scelta dell'oggetto funzionante nella sfera magica cada sugli oggetti "belli". Nel nostro caso: sulla bellezza di una vertebra. Anzi, al contrario, potremmo escludere questo genere, piuttosto avaro,

di basso mitologismo estetico. Per fortuna i nostri antenati erano sprovvisti del sentimento del bello; quel sentimento che, caduto dentro certi nostri artisti, li ha condotti a fare o ricostruire i nessi e le giunture di una morfologia mimetica, o a “creare” (come dicono loro) delle forme, perché sono “belle”. Questo è infantilismo: l’infantilismo inesperto e solennemente orbo delle estetiche. Nessuna sensibilità estetica supponiamo nell’uomo arcaico, sia quello preistorico, sia quello degli uomini allo stato etnografico. Non abbiamo mai supposto che gli idoli dell’isola di Pasqua o la venere di Savignano sul Panaro, siano “belle”. “Bella” è soltanto la venere di Milo e le riproduzioni in gesso che oggi si usa mettere sotto gli occhi dei giudici di concorsi per le elezioni di miss universo. Appunto perché le estetiche, supposto che abbiano un minimo senso prospettico, hanno soltanto quel senso, univoco e impotente.

Questo discorso è fatto tutto di domande. Allora domandiamo ancora: che cosa ha indotto l’uomo della grotta del Circeo a portarsi a casa la vertebra di balena? con lo stesso spirito con cui noi ci porteremmo a casa una indagine morfologica fatta in pietra o in legno dallo scultore Noguchi?

Il lavoro di indagine che deve portare una qualsiasi documenta risposta alla nostra questione non è ancora stato compiuto. I material non sono ancora stati posti nella speciale prospettiva, necessaria a far ripensare su questo argomento, che è alla base della nostra coscienza medesima di artisti e di uomini. Ma rimane il fatto che la parte più sollevata, più solenne, più audace della produzione artistica moderna, e ormai anche statisticamente più ricca, è quella che cerca il suo orientamento nella naturale reviviscenza delle etimologie sorprese nel loro trasalimento originario, e nella sua alterna condotta storica. Il recupero dell’atto iniziale, e di tutte le sue conseguenze, questa decisiva e definitiva ripresa del gesto puro che ha condotto l’uomo preistorico alla comunicazione concreta con il mondo, anzi a una presa di possesso del mondo, è sottointeso, ma non tanto sottointeso da non essere almeno segretamente operante, nella maturità del lavoro. Ai superficiali che obbietano che l’invenzione nonfigurativa è vecchia di quart’anni, noi obbiettiamo che invece essa è vecchia di cinquantamila anni. Che è sempre una bella età. E una vertebra di balena, scoperta sul litorale o ritrovata nel flusso della immaginazione e del gesto che la realizza, è sempre più arte, cioè più tempo, più umanità, più energia, più intelligenza, più precisione, più purezza, che non un paesaggio di Courbet o un noioso gruppo di Rodin, per non dire altro.

*In “Arti Visive” n. 1, Roma 1954.

Prehistory and Us Regarding a Recent Discovery*

As if cutting through time on the slopes of Mount Circeo, the patient and tenacious work carried out by paleontologists, and especially by Prof. Blanc, has, over the last few months, unearthed a new revelation: they discovered the fossilized remains (a lower jaw with a few teeth) of a child, or rather of a small hominid of about ten belonging to the Neanderthal race that lived in that remote part of Lazio some tens of thousands of years ago. The years are determined by the radioactivity in the isotopes of carbon, drawn from the carbon residue found in prehistoric fire pits. These latest findings, assessed approximately, will be sent to the United States, where the systems in place to calculate radioactivity are much more advanced in respect to those of our own scientific institutions. Yet it is not the child’s three little teeth that interest us the most. More important is Prof. Blanc’s report of having found, in one of the caves he explored, the vertebra of

whale, which the primitive Neanderthal hominids had evidently recovered from the seashore. Nowadays, it is believed that, while extraordinary hunters, Neanderthals did not possess any faculties that we would today call “artistic”: or at least paleontology has yet to find any traces of them. However, what Prof. Blanc has revealed, with the acuteness that always sets his work apart, is this: the fact that picking up and transporting the vertebra into their dwelling should prove they understood the object’s “singularity.”

This is really the point that concerns us, and that should lead us to an analysis much more profound than those conducted thus far, through a univocally restrictive prospective, by aesthetics regarding those human, pre-human or even para-human manifestations that in some sense coincide with so-called “artistic” faculties. In fact, we still need to ask ourselves what Neanderthal man could have “seen” in the whale vertebra in order to drag into his house? could it have been merely an intuition of a magical-religious character? Perhaps, keeping in mind the simple and basic comprehension of pre-logical thought, of the prehistoric thought that cannot easily be separated into levels or elements, it was not magical at all? Maybe the idea of what the vertebra represents was in and of itself intuited as magical? And that means the structure, la continuity, the constant metric variety, the iteration? Could we consider the feeling evoked by the vertebra – the chain, the serpent, the intertwining – the first, and last, formation of the so-called artistic feeling, of the intuition of rhythm?

Although unlikely, we may presume the vertebra brought into the cave held a magic, apotropaic, cultic function. However, what both paleontologists and historical archeologists have struggled to clarify is precisely the reason why an object, either found in nature or manufactured, came to be charged with a function that the object itself does not have naturally. Through what sort of procedure does the object become significant within an apparently heterogeneous order? What pushes it toward that subsequent nature? What causes the object to emit new relationships with spheres of activity that are external to it? Is it a mechanical procedure or a psychological procedure? An analysis should, first and foremost, proceed to classify and qualify, as well as engage in a congruous comparison, of all objects labeled by the scientific community as magic. Therefore, we must ask: why these objects, why this series of objects and not others? In short: here’s the whale vertebra. Here’s a form, a structure, an aspect of natural preying. We do want to even faintly insinuate, like some narrow-minded esthetic or mistaken dilettante, that the choice of the object to hold a function within the magical sphere is determined by “beautiful” objects. In our case: the beauty of a whale vertebra. Instead it is quite the opposite; we may exclude this rather stingy sort of low aesthetic mythologism. Fortunately our ancestors were spared this feeling of beauty; the feeling that consumes most of our artists and pushes them to forge or remodel the connections and joints of a mimetic morphology, or “to create” (as they say) forms, because they are “beautiful.” This childish thinking: the inexperienced and solemnly shortsighted childish thinking of aesthetics. We do not presume any aesthetic sensibility in archaic man, prehistoric man, or even those in an ethnographic state. We have never presumed that the idols of Easter Island or the Venus of Savignano sul Panaro are “beautiful.” “Beautiful is only the Venus of Milo and the cast reproductions that are today placed under the eyes of judges electing miss universe. Precisely because aesthetics, supposing they have even a slightly perspective sense, have only that sense, univocal and impotent.

This argument is entirely comprised of questions. So let’s keep asking: what urged the man of the caves in Circeo to bring home the whale vertebra, with the same spirit with which we would bring home a morphologic investigation in stone or wood by the sculpture Noguchi?

The investigatory groundwork required to eventually document any answers to these questions has yet to be carried out. The materials still have not been placed in the special perspective necessary to rethinking this argument, which lies at the base of our very understanding of artists and men. However, the fact remains that the most salient, the most solemn, the most audacious, and by now statistically the most rich, part of modern artistic production, is that which seeks its orientation in the natural revivification of etymologies surprised in their original stimulation, as well as in their alternative historical behavior. The recovery of this initial act, and all of its consequences, this decisive and defining retrieval of the pure act that led prehistoric man to the concrete communication with the world, or rather to a taking possession of the world, is implied, but not so implied that it is not operating secretly, by the maturity of the work. To those superficial people who object by saying non-figurative invention is forty years old, we object that it is instead fifty thousand years old. It is always a golden age. And a whale vertebra, discovered on the shore or found in the flux of the imagination or act the realizes it, is always more art, that is more time, more humanity, more energy, more intelligence, more precision, more purity, than a landscape by Courbet or a group of Rodin's, to say not anymore.

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Dal Genesi

*L'Impresa del Rettile*¹

Di tutti gli animali selvaggi che Jahwè aveva fatto, il Rettile era il più subdolo². Difatti il Rettile disse alla Femmina: “Certamente Elohim avrà detto: ‘Non mangiate niente da nessun albero dell’Oasi!’”

La Femmina rispose al Rettile: “La frutta degli alberi dell’Oasi noi la mangiamo; ma, quanto alla frutta dell’albero che sta al centro dell’Oasi ha detto Elohim: ‘Non mangiatela, e non toccatela nemmeno; se no morrete!’”

Il Rettile rispose alla Femmina: “Non è vero affatto, non morrete! Anzi, Elohim sa bene che, quando ne mangiaste, i vostri occhi si aprirebbero, e diventereste allora come gli elohim, conoscitori di tutto, dell’Universo”.

La Femmina allora si accorse che l’albero era buono da mangiare, e che solo a guardarlo metteva appetito. L’albero dava la concupiscenza di comprendere le cose. Essa staccò un frutto dell’albero e mangiò; e ne diede anche al suo Maschio, che le stava accanto; e questi mangiò. Si aprirono allora gli occhi³ a tutt’e due, e s’accorsero che loro eran nudi! Cucirono subito insieme delle foglie di fico⁴, e si fecero dei perizomi.

A un certo punto udirono il rumore di Jahwè che passeggiava su e giù per l’Oasi, alla brezza marina; l’Uomo e la Donna si nascosero, lontano dalla presenza di Jahwè, in mezzo agli alberi dell’Oasi.

Jahwè chiamò l’Uomo, e gli disse: “Dove sei?”, ed egli rispose: “Ho sentito nell’Oasi il tuo rumore, e mi sono spaventato, perché sono nudo; così mi sono nascosto.” Disse: “Chi ti ha fatto capire che sei nudo? Tu hai mangiato qualche cosa da quell’albero, e io invece ti avevo proibito di mangiarne!” E l’Uomo rispose: “È stata la Femmina che tu mi hai messo accanto a darmi da mangiare una cosa dell’albero.”

Jahwè disse alla Donna: “Perché hai agito così?” La Donna rispose: “Il Rettile mi ha convinto, e ho mangiato.”

Allora Jahwè disse al Rettile:

“Poiché tu hai fatto questo,
maledetto tu (tra tutte le bestie)⁵,
[e] tra tutti gli animali selvaggi!
Camminerai sul tuo ventre,
e fango mangerai,
per tutto il tempo della tua esistenza!

La discordia io pongo
tra te e la Donna
e tra il tuo seme
e il suo seme!

Egli (?) ti schiaccerà il cranio
e tu conoscerai⁶ il (suo) calcagno!”

Alla Femmina disse:
“Moltiplicherò oltre il sopportabile
i dolori delle tue gravidanze:
partorirai figli con dolore!
Avrai voglia del tuo maschio,
ed egli ti terrà soletta.”

All’Uomo disse:
“Poiché hai obbedito alla voce della tua Femmina,
e hai mangiato dall’albero
mentre ti avevo proibito di mangiarne,
maledetta, per causa tua, la campagna!
con dolore ne trarrai nutrimento
per tutto il tempo della tua vita.

Spine e gramigne ti produrrà
e mangerai erbe selvatiche.
Con il sudore del tuo volto
ti procurerai da mangiare,
fino a che tornerai nella terra,
perché da essa tu provieni;
perché tu sei fango
e nel fango ritornerai!”⁷

Poi l’Uomo chiamò la sua Femmina con il nome di Eva⁸, cioè “la Vivente”, perché essa fu la madre di tutti i viventi.

All’Uomo e alla sua Donna Jahwè fece delle gonne di pelle⁹, e con esse li vestì.

L’Espulsione

Jahwè disse: “Se l’Uomo può diventare uguale a uno di noi nella conoscenza universale, allora bisogna ch’egli non stenda la sua mano a cogliere un’altra volta frutta dall’Albero della Vita per mangiarne e vivere immortale.” Per questo Jahwè lo cacciò fuori dall’Oasi della Steppa, mandandolo a lavorare la terra, dalla quale era stata prelevato. Espulse l’Uomo; quindi, di fronte all’ingresso dell’Oasi della Steppa collocò i Cherubini¹⁰ e Spada-di-fiamme, a custodire il sentiero dell’Albero della Vita.

¹ Il mito della “caduta” dell’uomo nelle strettoie storiche del male, dell’indigenza, del dolore, della fatica, dell’insicurezza, il mito della fine del prestigio umano, del deperimento della sua natura medesima, è grande mito oscuro e fantasioso. Le sue radici immaginose attingono al sentimento, diffuso in tutte le mitologie, di un destino drammatico, e si articolano, probabilmente, con l’istituto, e la conseguente violazione, di un tabù dietetico, che anima un’atmosfera dove il protagonista del dramma, l’uomo, sopravvive, nonostante tutto, a tutte le insidie delle figurazioni agitate (dallo spirito così detto “religioso”) che lo circondano come aspetti della morte, carichi di energie fatali e fatidiche, prodotti da una fantasia epico-teatrale che

si cristallizza nel culto, e che opera se medesima come spettacolo enigmatico e come angosciata ragione dell'esistenza. Queste figurazioni sono divenute a loro volta personaggi, deuteragonisti, comparse, e sono: il Dio-Mago, il Serpente-Chimera, il Demone-Serpente, il Frutto stregato, il Dio-Artigiano ("Fattore"), il dio Istitutore, gli Alberi magici, Alberi-Divinazione, preveggenti, oracolari, Alberi di Vita e di Giovinezza perpetua, Alberi-Stupefacenti, il Deus Furens, il Deus Otiosus, i Demoni vari, e le varie strumentazioni ambientali, terrestri o atmosferiche, spade, fulmini, fuoco, acque.

² "Rettile": *nhs*. Si traduce così tradizionalmente, per cui si usa intendere un animale come il serpente affine a quello della nostra nozione tassonomica. Però in realtà il referto mitologico ebraico allude a un grande e celebrato Mostro cosmogonico, di natura marina, abissale, uno dei maggiori avversari dell'Elohim. Assistiamo in questo mito a una delle fasi residue di una maggiore teomachia. Più tardi la teologia giudaica interpreterà il "Serpente" come una manifestazione del Diavolo, di Satana. Ma nei testi sapienziali e in Isaia (27,1) il *nhs* è un vero e proprio Dragone, è il famoso Leviatan (ben noto alla letteratura ebraica come antagonista di Jahwè; e il nome è ripreso dalla mitologia cananeo-ugaritica). Perché il relatore ricorre proprio al nome di *nhs*? Il racconto è di natura etimologizzante, il mitema interpreta parole affini, e si fonda sul valore magico-analogico (in strutture ritmico-onomastiche, in iterazioni magicamente intensificanti) della parola. La voce *nhs* aveva anche in ebraico (come ha sempre avuto in arabo, *nahisa*) il valore di "malefizio, malaugurio". Infatti è con l'accadimento, di prospettiva atropocosmica, del rapporto Donna-Serpente che irrompono nella storia umana il male e la morte. La concezione magica è evidente. Probabile è inoltre che il racconto ricorra giusto a una deformazione fonetica del nome sumero e assiro di questo Mostro primordiale, che è *MUSHUS*, per trarne un significato aderente a una concezione magico-iettatoria. Infine la voce *nhs* è legata a quella di *nhst*, che, sull'akk. *nahsatu*, sembra significare "mestruazione" (e questo deve, secondo noi, poter essere il significato di *nhst* in Ezechiele, 16,36). È intenzione del testo di incontrare proprio ai primordi una conferma del tabù del sangue mestruale. A distanza di secoli, nell'epoca post-giudaica, il maggior testo apocalittico, *L'Apocalisse* di Giovanni, evoca la Femmina e il Mostro (il "Gran Dragone" *rosso*), certamente con riguardo al modello contenuto nel nostro testo: la Femmina è Eva, e il Mostro è Satana, come Serpente *rosso*, *nhs*, *nhst*; sotto i piedi della Femmina, sta la luna, simbolo del ritmo mestruale.

L'esegesi messianica offerta da buona parte della patristica e della teologia cristiana, ha definito questo breve referto mitologico un "proto-evangelo" (il Rettile è il "diavolo", egli sarà sconfitto da un "figlio (?) della Donna", cioè dal Cristo, che è il tardo e stanco mito uscito dal groviglio dei miti accolti dai profeti ebrei; la Donna è la "Vergine Maria", ma l'arbitraria concezione non aderisce al nostro testo neppure in un punto, e sembra una delle più avventurate o stravaganti. Per di più la lingua rimane misteriosa e il dettato oracolare del tutto enigmatico, per via delle oscurità lessicali e per l'ambiguità delle referenze. Senonché la monomania ossessiva dell'esegesi messianistica, tanto giudaica quanto post-giudaica, è sempre in posizione aggressiva sul testo che non rende quello che il "messianismo" esige.

"Subdolo: ebr. *'rm*. S'intende, anche, insieme: "nudo", oltre che "subdolo". Prosegue il gioco etimologista, basato sulla omofonia tra *'rm*, "astuto, subdolo", e *'rm*, "nudo". Cioè, il Rettile, che è *'rm*, dice alla Donna che lei diventerà Elohim (o come Elohim) se mangia di quel frutto. Essa ne mangia, insieme ne mangia l'uomo, e, anziché Elohim, tutt'e due diventano *'rmm*, "nudi"; cioè anche "demoniaci", nudi come la biscia.

³ “si aprirono gli occhi”: il serpente non ha mentito, l’uomo e la donna sono ora diventati Elohim, conoscono tutto; allora il serpente è stato più forte di Jawhè. È uno degli episodi agonistici residuati da teomachie anteriori.

Elementi e mitemi tipici di questo racconto sono anche conservati, o forse perfino in parte tratti, da un comune patrimonio mitologico, che ha una redazione precipua, forse germinale, in un racconto della mitologia egiziana: secondo la quale la Donna-Maga (anche Eva è intesa come tale), che aveva nome Iside (*st*), voleva diventare una divinità. Riuscì infatti allo scopo con uno stratagemma (fece un Serpente, con la saliva del Vecchio Sole, il dio Râ) che (reinterpretato a rovescio) è analogo a quello biblico: Iside riuscì a ottenere che il Serpente mordesse il tallone o calcagno della vecchia divinità; e così Iside poté conoscere il nome, cioè l’essenza del dio; e divenne essa stessa “dea”, la famosa divinità, che per venticinque secoli conobbe culto vario e sempre più vasto in tutto il mediterraneo. La letteratura akkadica offre un esemplare mitologico abbastanza antico (sec. XV; il testo è stato ritrovato tra i materiali di *tell el-Amarna* in Egitto) che fu ripetutamente comparato con la storia di Adamo. Il mito era noto anche al sacerdote e scrittore caldeo Beroso. Si definisce generalmente come il “mito di Adapa”, e nello stesso nome di Adapa alcuni critici intesero una relazione con il nome Adamo ma la cosa non è provata.

⁴ “foglie di fico”: il nome del “fico”, *t’nh*, appartiene a un largo e complesso calembour, o gioco etimologico-simbolico, su due radici affini, *’wn* e *’nh*, in cui un ebreo sentiva un trascorrere di temi o significati che vanno da “sesso, erotismo” (anche in Geremia, 2, 24, *t’nh*; in Isaia *’wn* è un “Dio-sesso”) a “sciagura, disgrazia, lutto; fatica”. Non si riesce a scorgere, però, fino in fondo, l’idea del testo, cioè se veramente la concezione del relatore del mito consideri la “caduta”, il grande “castigo”, come conseguenza di una trasgressione sessuale, e il sesso come origine della caduta umana, del peccato. E non è possibile decidere se il “mito” è fondato su uno sforzo, o tensione, del linguaggio, o diciamo, della convenzione (o convinzione) lessicale, o se appartiene a una formazione con tramiti omeomorfi, e in ogni caso autonomi.

⁵ “maledetto tu...”: la sintassi non aiuta a comprendere bene il senso di questa maledizione. Si può anche letteralmente intendere: “maledetto tu... più di tutti gli animali selvaggi”. O forse meglio: “maledetto tu... da tutti gli animali selvaggi”, cioè “tutti gli animali selvaggi ti maledicano” (concezione del bestiario mitologico e favolistico).

⁶ “schiaccerà... conoscerai”: la frase è enigmatica, e il verbo *swp* non è comprensibile in ebraico. Qui riteniamo i due *swp* prestati dall’akk. *sapu* “schiacciare con i piedi, calpestare” e akk. *sapû* “guardare, vedere”. Antichi e moderni traducono in vari modi; più o meno alla ventura. Dobbiamo considerare il testo come perduto, fino a che analogie testuali, o nuove comparazioni letterarie nell’ambito dell’antico oriente, possano offrire mezzi più sicuri che ci aprano il testo.

⁷ “nel fango... tornerai”. La natura di questa metamorfosi punitiva, che è degradazione, è ripresa alle concezioni mesopotamiche. Da confrontare, nel mito akkadico *Zû e Lugalbanda*: “chi si oppone a lui (= a Enlili) diventa argilla” (vv. 52-53, 74-75).

⁸ “Eva”: ebr. *hwh*, continua il mito onomastico, basato sul complesso sistema di sincretismi etimologici. Nel nome Eva, che si può ritenere mutuato a testi mitologici sumeri, è contenuto il sumero AWA (AMA), “madre, femmina”, su cui l’influsso etimologico semitico avrà sentito

hwj “serpente” (da cfr. aram. *haiwa* e sopra tutto arab. *hayya* “serpente”), e, insieme, la voce arcaica *hwh* “vita”. Anche nel pantheon fenicio esisteva una dea *hwt*, divinità di carattere o di natura ofidica, una dea dei serpenti, forse però piuttosto da situare in aera mediterranea, cretese. La scrittura ideografica sumera ha un segno che rappresenta il fiore della kalla: TIL. Il segno ha tre significati: “vita, essere”; “abitare”; “costola del corpo umano”. Il segno è facilmente da mettere in relazione con il nome e il racconto di Eva.

Un rapporto di dipendenza di Eva rispetto alla mitologia sumera sembra presentato dalle caratteristiche e dalle azioni della divinità ^{dingir} NIN-TI-UG-GA “Signora che dà la vita al non-vivente” (assiro *muballitat mîti*), madre di tutta l’umanità, dea del parto, esperta nell’arte dei farmaci e delle qualità terapeutiche e stupefacenti di certe piante. Il suo nome significa inoltre “Signora della costola”. Un testo sembra presentare un elemento affine al “frutto proibito”.

⁹ “di pelle”: ebr. ‘*wr*. Continua, però il gioco etimologico, affine a quello di “foglie di fico” (v.n. 3,7). In realtà la voce ‘*wr* significa anche “cecità”, sia fisica che psichica, “cecità mentale, offuscamento della ragione”; cioè l’uomo, maschio e femmina, passa a una condizione di “ignoranza”. Noi non sappiamo che cosa esattamente intendesse questo mito per “Conoscenza” e per “Ignoranza”. Soltanto si rivela che, secondo il mito, si possono verificare, nella storia dell’uomo, due strati oggettivi, esterni alla mente umana, e che sono: lo splendore e la nitidezza delle cose, ben distinte tra loro; e la nebbia, il vapore che obnubila le cose stesse. Scendendo nel secondo strato, la mente è immersa nell’Ignoranza. Da questo punto, il tentativo di recuperare gli aspetti e il meccanismo del pensiero così detto “primitivo” e delle sue avventure, appartiene alla scienza speciale che se ne occupa.

L’esegesi giudaica, nel medioevo, era arrivata ad asserire (con Mosé Maimonide) che prima del peccato l’uomo, in quanto “immagine dell’Elohim” possiede i mezzi di discernimento della verità dalla falsità; mentre dopo il peccato, egli possiede solo “opinioni”, cioè conosce solo il probabile. Naturalmente è interpretazione di carattere aristotelico, cui il testo non sembra in alcun senso essere affine; è l’intrusione della filosofia nell’esegesi; intrusione largamente avversata da altri interpreti (specialmente dalle interpretazioni provenienti dalla Cabala, e dai vari Allegorismi mistici).

¹⁰ “Cherubini”: divinità tutelari, raffigurate come animali dalla testa di leone o di bovino, e muniti di ali, per lo più raccolte sul corpo; erano collocate, in Mesopotamia, dinnanzi alle porte dei templi, in funzione di custodi dell’abitazione divina. Nella fantomistica ebraica, i Cherubini sono destinati a trasportare sul proprio dorso, o sulle proprie ali, o a sorreggere in alto la divinità Jahwè. Qui, invece, sono in funzione di difensori, o guardiani: della Steppa, o Eden; e sarebbe da intendere “gli Apotropaici”, nel verbo akkadico *karabu*, che sembra abbia qualche connessione con l’ebraico *brk*, in generale “benedire; augurare”, ma anche (sembra da un passo almeno, Deut. 27,12) “proteggere, preservare, difendere” (in senso, appunto, apotropaico).

From Genesis

*The Reptile’s Endeavor*¹

Of all the wild animals Yahweh had made, the Reptile was the sliest². In fact the Reptile said to the Female: “Elohim certainly told you: ‘Don’t eat anything from any tree of the Oasis!’”

The Female answered the Reptile: “We eat the fruit of the trees of the Oasis; but as for the fruit of the tree at the center of the Oasis, Elohim said: ‘Do not eat it, and do not even touch it; if you do, you will die!’”

The Reptile answered the Female: “That is not true at all, you will not die! Quite the opposite, Elohim knows that, if you ate it, your eyes would open, and you would become like Elohim, who know everything, the Universe.”

Then the Female realized that the tree was good to eat, and that just looking at it brought on an appetite. The tree aroused a desire to comprehend things. She plucked a fruit from the tree and ate it; and gave some of it to her Male, who stood next to her; and he ate it. Then the eyes of both opened,³ and they realized they were naked! They immediately sewed together some fig leaves⁴, and made themselves some loincloths.

At a certain point they heard the sound of Yahweh strolling up and down the Oasis, in the sea breeze; the Man and the Woman hid, far from the presence of Yahweh, among the trees of the Oasis.

Yahweh called the Man and said to him: “Where are you?” and he answered: “I heard the sound you made in the Oasis, and was frightened, because I am naked; so I hid.” He said: “Who made you aware of your nakedness? You ate something from that tree, and I instead had forbidden you to eat from it!” And the Man answered: “It was the Female you placed next to me who gave me a thing to eat from that tree.”

Yahweh said to the Woman: “Why did you behave that way?” The Woman answered: “The Reptile convinced me, and I ate.”

Then Yahweh said to the Reptile:

“Because you did this,
cursed are you (among all beasts)⁵
[and] among all wild animals!
You will walk on your belly,
and will eat mud,
for as long as you exist!

The discord I sow
between you and the Woman
and between your seed
and her seed!

He (?) will crush your skull
and you will know⁶ (his) heel!”
He said to the Female:
“I will multiply beyond tolerable
the pains of your childbearing:
you will give birth to children in pain!
You will lust after your male,
and he will enslave you.”

He said to the Man:

“Because you obeyed the voice of your Female,
and you ate from the tree,
while I had forbidden you to eat from it,
the land will be cursed, because of you!
in pain, you will draw nourishment from it
for as long as you live.

For you it will produce thorns and weeds
and you will eat wild greens.
By the sweat of your brow
you will gather your food
until you return to the earth,
for that is where you are from;
because you are mud
and to mud you will return!”⁷

The Man gave his Female the name Eve⁸, that is “the Living” for she was the mother of all who lived.

For the Man and his Woman Yahweh made some leather skirts⁹, and with these he clothed them.

The Expulsion

Yahweh said: “If Man can become just like one of us in universal knowledge, then he must not extend his hand to pick again the fruit of the Tree of Life to eat it and live immortal.” For this reason Yahweh banished him from the Oasis of the Steppe, sending him to work the earth, from which he had been drawn. He expelled Man; thus, in front of the entrance to the Oasis of the Steppe he positioned Cherubs¹⁰ and Swords-of-Flames, to guard the path to the Tree of Life.

¹ The myth of the “fall” of man in the historic bottlenecks of evil, of destitution, of pain, of toil, of insecurity, the myth of the end of human prestige, of the deterioration of his very nature, is a highly obscure and fantastical myth. Its imaginative roots hint at the feeling, widespread in all mythologies, of a dramatic destiny, and they are articulated, with the institution, and the subsequent violation, of a dietetic taboo, which animates an atmosphere where the drama’s protagonist, man, survives, despite everything, all the traps of agitated figurations (laid out by the so-called “religious” spirit) that surround him as aspects of death, charged with fatal and fateful energies, produced by an epic-theatrical fantasy that is crystallized in the cult, and that operates in and of itself as an enigmatic spectacle and as a painful reason behind existence. These figurations became in their own right characters, deuteragonists, apparitions, and they are: the God-Magician, the Serpent-Chimera, the Demon-Serpent, the wicked Fruit, the God-Artisan (“Maker”), the Instructor god, the magic Trees, Trees-Divinations, soothsayers, oracles, Trees of Life and eternal Youth, Trees-Hallucinogen, the Deus Furens, the Deus Otiosus, the various Demons, and the various environmental props, either earthly or atmospheric – swords, lightning, fire, waters.

² “Reptile”: *nhs*. This is traditionally translated as such, and therefore typically refers to an animal like the serpent similar to that of our taxonomic notion. In reality, however, the Hebrew mythological reference alludes to a great and celebrated cosmogonic Monster of an abyssal, marine nature; one of Elohim’s major adversaries. In this myth we find one of the residual phases of a larger theomachy. Later Hebrew theology would interpret the “Serpent” as the manifestation of the Devil, of Satan. Yet in the sapiential books and in Isaiah (27,1) the *nhs* is a real Dragon, it is the famous Leviathan (well-known to Hebrew literature as Yahweh’s antagonist; and the name was taken from Canaanite-Ugaritic mythology). Why does the narrator hearken back to the name *nhs*? The story is of an etymologizing nature, the mytheme interprets similar words, and is founded upon the magical-analogical (in rhythmic-onomastic structures, in magically intensified iterations) of words. In Hebrew the term *nhs* also held (as it always has in Arabic, *nahisa*) the sense of “witchcraft, ill-omens.” In fact it is with the advent, of an anthropocosmic perspective, of the relationship Woman-Serpent when evil and death burst into human history. The magical concept is evident. Also, it is probable that story recalls precisely a phonetic deformation of the Sumerian and Assyrian name for this primordial Monster, which is MUSHUS, drawing from it a meaning that adheres to an idea of magical-jinxing. Finally, the term *nhs* is tied to that of *nhst*, which, from the Akkadian *nahsatu*, seems to mean “menstruation” (and this, in our opinion, could possibly be the meaning of *nhst* in Ezekiel, 16, 36). It is the text’s intention to find, precisely in the origins, a confirmation of the taboo of menstrual blood. Centuries later, in the post-Judaic period, the major apocalyptic text, the *Apocalypse* by John, evokes the Female and the Monster (the “Great red Dragon”), certainly with regard to the model contained in our text: the Female is Eve, and the Monster is Satan, as the red Serpent, *nhs*, *nhst*; under the Female’s feet, is the moon, symbol of the menstrual cycle.

The Messianic exegesis offered by a good part of the patristics and by Christian theology, has deemed this brief mythological reference a “proto-gospel” (the Reptile is the “devil,” he will be defeated by a “son (?) of the Woman,” that is by the Christ, which is the late and tired myth taken from the tangle of myths collected by Hebrew prophets; the Woman is the “Virgin Mary,” but the arbitrary concept does not adhere to our text at any point, and seems one of the most adventurous or extravagant. Moreover, the language remains mysterious and the oracular diction completely enigmatic, due to lexical obscurities and the ambiguity of the references. Nonetheless, the obsessive monomania of Messianic exegesis, as much Judaic as post-Judaic, always assumes an aggressive position over the text, which doesn’t relay that which “Messianism” demands.

“Sly: *’rm* in Hebrew. It is also meant to convey: “nude,” in addition to “sly.” The etymological game continues, based on the homophony between *’rm*, “astute, sly,” and *’rm*, “nude.” That is, the Reptile, which is *’rm*, tells the Woman she will become Elohim (or like Elohim) if she eats of that fruit. She eats of it, the man also eats of it, and, rather than Elohim, both become *’rmm*, “nudi”; that is, also “demoniac,” nude like the snake.

³ “their eyes opened”: the serpent did not lie, man and woman have now become *Elohim*, they know everything; so the serpent was stronger than Yahweh. This is one of the agonistic episodes left over from earlier theomachies.

Elements and mythemes typical of this story are also contained in, or sometimes even taken directly from, a shared mythological patrimony, which may be in turn rooted in a tale belonging to Egyptian mythology: the Witch-Woman (with whom Eve shares certain traits),

called Isis (*st*), wanted to be become a goddess. She succeeded through a stratagem, which, reinterpreted backwards, is analogous to the biblical version. She made a serpent out of the saliva of the old sun god (*Râ*). Isis managed to get the snake to bite the talons or the heel of the old god; and thus Isis learned his name, that is to say his essence, and she herself became a “goddess,” the most famous godhead who, for twenty-five centuries, was worshipped in different ways and whose fame expanded across the Mediterranean. Akkadian literature offers a somewhat older exemplary mythology (XV century; the text was found among the materials of *tell el-Amarna* in Egypt) that was repeatedly compared to the story of Adam. The myth was also known to the Chaldean writer and priest, Berossus. It is generally defined the “Adapa myth,” and from the very name Adapa, some critics inferred a relation to the name Adam, yet such a thing has not been proven.

⁴ “fig leaves”: the name for fig, *t’nh*, belongs to a complex pun, or etymological-symbolic play, on two similar roots, *’wn* and *’nh*, in which a Hebrew heard a multitude of themes or meanings that range from “sex, eroticism” (also in Jeremiah, 2, 24, *t’nh*; in Isaiah *’wn* is a “sex-God”) to “shame, disgrace, grief; toil.” However, the idea behind this passage cannot be fully deciphered, that is if the narrator’s concept of the myth actually considers the “fall,” “the great punishment,” the consequence of a sexual transgression, and sex as the origin of the human fall, of sin. It is impossible to decide whether the “myth” is founded on a forcing, or tension, of the language, or let’s say, of the lexical convention (or conviction), or if it belongs to a formation through homeomorphic, and in any case, autonomous, changes.

⁵ “cursed are you”: here the syntax is too convoluted to permit a clear interpretation of this curse. It could literally be read as: “cursed are you... more than any other wild animal.” Or better still: “cursed are you by all wild animals,” that is “may all wild animals curse you” (a concept from the fabled and mythological bestiary).

⁶ “you will crush... you will know”: the phrase is enigmatic and the verb *swp* is not understandable in Hebrew. Here we maintain that the two *swp* have been borrowed from the Akkadian *sapu*, “to smash with one’s feet, or to trample” as well as from the Akkadian *sapû*, “to look and to see.” Both ancient and modern scholars have translated this in various ways; and more or less haphazardly. Thus we are at a loss. A reliable interpretation of the passage cannot be made until new documents surface from the Ancient East, allowing us to clarify it through textual comparisons.

⁷ “to mud you will return.” The nature of this punitive metamorphosis, which is degradation, is taken from Mesopotamian concepts. To be compared with the Akkadian myth *Zû e Lugalbanda*: “who opposes him (= Enlil) is turned clay” (versus 52-53, 74-75).

⁸ “Eve”: *hwh* in Hebrew, is a continuation of the onomastic myth, based on the complex system of etymological syncretisms. In the name Eve, which we can consider to be borrowed from Sumerian mythological texts, is contained the Sumerian AWA (AMA), “mother, female,” in which the Semitic ear would have heard *hwj*, “snake,” (see the Aramaic *haiwa* and most of all the Arabic *hayya*, “snake), as well as the archaic word *hwh*, “life.” Even in the Phoenician pantheon existed a goddess *hwt*, a divinity of an ophidian nature or character, a snake goddess, which is possibly better situated within a Mediterranean context, specifically that of Crete.

Sumerian ideographic writing has a sign that represents the flower of the kalla: TIL. The sign has three meanings: “life, being”; “to live”; “rib of the human body.” The sign is easily placed in relation to the name and story of Eve.

An interdependence between Eve and the Sumerian mythology seems to be supported by the characteristics and by the actions of the divinity ^{dingir} NIN-TI-UG-GA, “Lady who gives life to the non-living” (*muballitat mīti* in Assyrian), mother of all humanity, goddess of childbirth, expert in the art of medicine and in the therapeutic and psychotropic quality of plants. Her name also means “Lady of the rib.” One text seems to present an element similar to that of the “forbidden fruit.”

⁹ “leather”: *wr* in Hebrew. This, however, continues the etymological game, similar to that of “fig leaves” (lines 3,7). In reality, the term *wr* also means “blindness,” both physical and psychological, “mental blindness, obfuscation of reason”; that is, man, male and female, passes to a condition of “ignorance.” We don’t know what this myth meant exactly by “Knowledge” and “Ignorance.” We can only say that the myth allows us to verify, in the history of man, two objective layers, external to the human mind, and they are: the splendor and the clarity of things, well distinguished between them; and the fog, the steam that clouds the things themselves. Delving into the second layer, the mind is immersed in Ignorance. From this point, the task of recuperating the aspects and the mechanism of the so-called “primitive” thought and its adventures belongs to the special science that deals with such issues.

The Judaic exegesis, in the medieval period, went so far as to maintain (with Moses Maimonides) that before the sin, man, being that he was the “image of Elohim,” possessed the means of discerning between true and false; while after the sin, he only possessed “opinions,” that is he only knows the probable. Naturally, this is an interpretation of an Aristotelian character, to which the text is not akin in any way; this is an intrusion of philosophy upon the exegesis; one that has been widely carried out by other interpreters (especially by the interpretations hailing from the Cabala, and by various mystic Allegories).

¹⁰ “Cherubs”: protective divinities, depicted as animals with the head of a lion or cow, equipped with wings, most of the time folded on their body. In Mesopotamia, they were positioned before temple gates, as guardians of the divine dwelling. In the Hebrew phantomyth, the Cherubs are charged with transporting or lifting, either on their back or on their wings, the divinity Yahweh. Here, instead, they are used as defenders, or guardians: of the Steppe, or Eden; and should be understood as “the Apotropaic,” according to the Akkadian verb *karabu*, which seems to have some connection with the Hebrew *brk*, generally “to bless; to wish,” but also (it seems from at least one passage: Deuteronomy 27, 12) “to protect, preserve, defend” (precisely in the apotropaic sense).

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**This bibliography is a work-in-progress and is by no means exhaustive, for the actual extent of Villa's artistic corpus still remains a mystery. Besides being scattered about Italy, Europe, and even Brazil, much of his work lies in the archives of his fellow friends and artists, as well as in the hands of private collectors. After his death in 2003, Villa's archives were divided between the Biblioteca Panizzi in Reggio Emilia, which contains a number of unpublished poems in various languages as well as Villa's a-confessional translation of the Hebrew Bible, and the Fondazione Baruchello in Rome, which houses Villa's writings on art.*

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